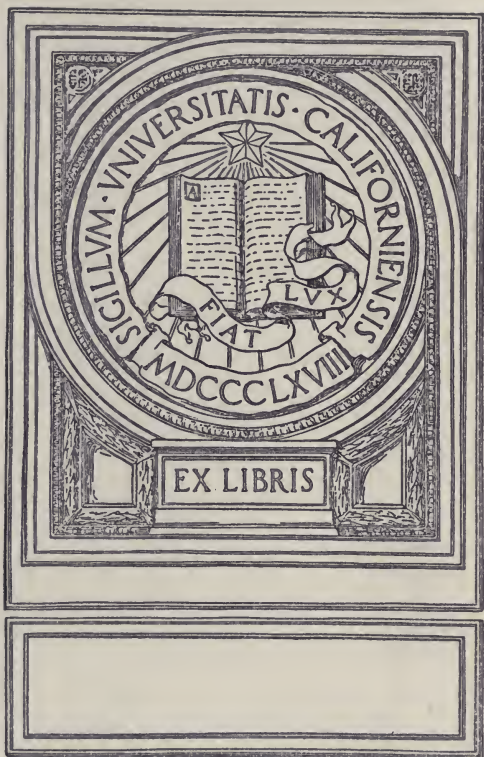




Emma J. B. Rose -

From Mary
Christmas. 1890

POEMS BY
JULIA C. R. DORR



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



Julia C. R. Doro.

❧ P O E M S ❧

BY

Mrs JULIA C. *W. R.* DORR

COMPLETE EDITION



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
MDCCCXCII

953
D716
1892

COPYRIGHT, 1879, 1885, 1892, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

TO S. M. D.

*L*ET us go forth and gather golden-rod !
O love, my love, see how upon the hills,
Where still the warm air palpitates and thrills,
And earth lies breathless in the smile of God,
Like plumes of serried hosts its tassels nod !
All the green vales its golden glory fills ;
By lonely waysides and by mountain rills
Its yellow banners flaunt above the sod.
Perhaps the apple-blossoms were more fair ;
Perhaps, dear heart, the roses were more sweet,
June's dewy roses, with their buds half blown ;
Yet what care we, while tremulous and rare
This golden sunshine falleth at our feet
And song lives on, though summer birds have flown ?

August, 1884.

*Let the words stand as they were writ, dear heart !
Although no more for thee in earthly bowers
Shall bloom the earlier or the later flowers ;
Although to-day 'tis spring-time where thou art,
While I, with Autumn, wander far apart,
Yet, in the name of that long love of ours,
Tested by years and tried by sun and showers,
Let the words stand as they were writ, dear heart !*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DEDICATION. To S. M. D.	v

EARLIER POEMS.

THE THREE SHIPS, ...	3
MAUD AND MADGE, ...	6
A MOTHER'S QUESTION, ...	8
OVER THE WALL, ...	9
OUTGROWN, ...	11
A SONG FOR TWO, ...	14
A PICTURE, ...	15
HYMN TO LIFE, ...	16
THE CHIMNEY SWALLOW, ...	18
HEIRSHIP, ...	20
HILDA, SPINNING, ...	22
HEREAFTER, ...	25
WITHOUT AND WITHIN, ...	27
VASHTI'S SCROLL, ...	29
WHAT MY FRIEND SAID TO ME, ...	37
HYMN. For the Dedication of a Cemetery, ...	38
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY, ...	39
LYRIC. For the Dedication of a Music-Hall, ...	41
WHAT I LOST, ...	43
ONCE!	45
CATHARINE, ...	47
THE NAME, ...	48
UNDER THE PALM-TREES, ...	49

	PAGE
NIGHT AND MORNING, ...	51
AGNES, ...	53
"INTO THY HANDS,"	55
IDLE WORDS, ...	56
THE SPARROW TO THE SKYLARK, ...	58
THE BELL OF ST. PAUL'S, ...	60
DECEMBER 26, 1910. A Ballad of Major Anderson, ...	62
FROM BATON ROUGE, ...	66
IN THE WILDERNESS, ...	68
CHARLEY OF MALVERN HILL, ...	70
SUPPLICAMUS, ...	73
THE LAST OF SIX, ...	75
THE DRUMMER BOY'S BURIAL, ...	79
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE, ...	82
OUR FLAGS AT THE CAPITOL, ...	84
MY MOCKING-BIRD, ...	86
COMING HOME, ...	88
WAKENING EARLY, ...	90
BLEST, ...	92
HELEN, ...	94

"PRO PATRIA."

THE DEAD CENTURY, ...	97
THE RIVER OTTER, ...	106
PAST AND PRESENT, ...	109
VERMONT, ...	114
GETTYSBURG. 1863-1889.	126
"NO MORE THE THUNDER OF CANNON,"	133
GRANT, ...	135

FRIAR ANSELMO, AND OTHER POEMS.

FRIAR ANSELMO, ...	141
THE KING'S ROSEBUD, ...	146
SOMEWHERE, ...	147

CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
PERADVENTURE, ...	148
RENA. A Legend of Brussels, ...	150
A SECRET, ...	159
THIS DAY, ...	161
"CHRISTUS!"	163
THE KISS, ...	167
WHAT SHE THOUGHT, ...	168
WHAT NEED?	170
TWO, ...	172
UNANSWERED, ...	175
THE CLAY TO THE ROSE, ...	178
AT THE LAST, ...	180
TO THE "BOUQUET CLUB,"	181
EVENTIDE, ...	182
MY LOVERS, ...	184
THE LEGEND OF THE ORGAN-BUILDER, ...	186
BUTTERFLY AND BABY BLUE, ...	190
KING IVAN'S OATH, ...	192
AT DAWN, ...	199
IN MEMORIAM, ...	201
WEAVING THE WEB, ...	203
THE "CHRISTUS" OF OBERAMMERGAU, ...	205
RABBI BENAIAH, ...	206
A CHILD'S THOUGHT, ...	209
"GOD KNOWS,"	211
THE MOUNTAIN ROAD, ...	213
ENTERING IN, ...	215
A FLOWER FOR THE DEAD, ...	217
THOU KNOWEST, ...	219
WINTER, ...	220
FIVE, ...	221
UNSOLVED, ...	223
QUIETNESS, ...	226
THE DIFFERENCE, ...	227
MY BIRTHDAY, ...	229
A RED ROSE, ...	231

	PAGE
TWENTY-ONE, ...	233
SINGING IN THE DARK, ...	235
THOMAS MOORE, ...	236
A LAST WORD, ...	238

SONNETS.

THE SONNET. I. To a Critic.	241
“ “ II. To a Poet.	241
AT REST, ...	243
TOO WIDE!	244
MERCÉDÈS, ...	245
GRASS-GROWN, ...	246
TO ZÜLMA, I, II, ...	247
SLEEP, ...	249
IN KING'S CHAPEL, ...	250
TO-DAY, ...	251
F. A. F., ...	252
DAY AND NIGHT, I, II, ...	253
THY NAME, ...	255
RESURGAMUS, ...	256
AT THE TOMB, ...	257
THREE DAYS, I, II, III, ...	258
DARKNESS, ...	260
SILENCE, ...	261
SANCTIFIED, ...	262
A MESSAGE, ...	263
WHEN LESSER LOVES, ...	264
GEORGE ELIOT, ...	265
KNOWING, ...	266
A THOUGHT, ...	267
TO-MORROW, I, II, ...	268
“O EARTH! ART THOU NOT WEARY?”	270
ALEXANDER, ...	271
THE PLACE, I, II, III, ...	272
TO A GODDESS, ...	274

CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
O. W. H., ...	275
GIFTS FOR THE KING, ...	276
RECOGNITION, I., II., ...	277
SHAKESPEARE, ...	279
TO E. C. S., ...	280
A CHRISTMAS SONNET, ...	281
POVERTY, ...	282
SURPRISES, I., II., ...	283
C. H. R., ...	285
A NEW BEATITUDE, ...	286
COMPENSATION, I., II., ...	287
QUESTIONINGS, ...	289
REMEMBRANCE, ...	290
IN THE HIGH TOWER, ...	291

AFTERNOON SONGS.

FOUR O'CLOCKS, ...	295
A DREAM OF SONGS UNSUNG, ...	296
QUESTIONING A ROSE, ...	304
THE FALLOW FIELD, ...	306
OUT AND IN, ...	309
HER FLOWERS, ...	310
THREE LADDIES, ...	312
SUMMER, ...	314
THORNLESS ROSES, ...	315
TREASURE-SHIPS, ...	316
CHOOSING, ...	318
NOT MINE, ...	320
THE CHAMBER OF SILENCE, ...	322
THREE ROSES, ...	325
FOUR LETTERS, ...	326
VALDEMAR, ...	328
JUBILATE !	338
EASTER LILIES, ...	339
"O, WIND THAT BLOWS OUT OF THE WEST,"	340

	PAGE
A SUMMER SONG, ...	342
THE URN, ...	344
THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER, ...	345
MARCH FOURTH, 1881-1882, ...	348
ROY, ...	350
THE PAINTER'S PRAYER, ...	351
FROM EXILE, ...	354
A MOTHER-SONG, ...	358
EASTER MORNING, ...	359
SEALED ORDERS, ...	363
AN ANNIVERSARY, ...	365
MARTHA, ...	367
THE HOUR, ...	368
THE CLOSED GATE, ...	369
CONTENT, ...	371
MY WONDERLAND, ...	373
THE GUEST, ...	375
AN OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN, ...	377
DISCONTENT, ...	380
THE DOVES AT MENDON, ...	383
A LATE ROSE, ...	386
PERIWINKLE, ...	387
AFTERNOON, ...	389
THE LADY OF THE PROW, ...	392
THOU AND I, ...	395

LATER POEMS.

THE LEGEND OF THE BABOUSHKA. A Christmas Ballad, .	399
DAYBREAK. An Easter Poem, ...	405
THE APPLE-TREE, ...	411
THE COMFORTER, ...	413
SANTA-CLAUS, ...	415
THE ARMORER'S ERRAND, ...	417
FORESHADOWINGS, ...	423
WON, ...	425

CONTENTS

xiii

	PAGE
BAPTISM OF FIRE, ...	427
AT THE FEAST, ...	429
OVER AND OVER, ...	430
A LISTENING BIRD, ...	432
THE FIRST FIRE, ...	433
MIDNIGHT CHIMES, ...	436
MY LADY SLEEP, ...	438
THE KING'S TOUCH, ...	440
"BY DIVERS PATHS,"	442
THE BLIND BIRD'S NEST, ...	444
TWO PATHS, ...	446
ST. JOHN'S EVE, ...	447
A LITTLE SONG, ...	449
THE PRINCES' CHAMBER, ...	450
WONDERLAND, ...	453
IN A GALLERY, ...	455
IN MARBLE PRAYER, ...	457
NOCTURNE, ...	459
COME WHAT MAY, ...	460
NUREMBERG, ...	462
A MATER DOLOROSA, ...	464
AFTER LONG WAITING, ...	470

EARLIER POEMS

THE THREE SHIPS

OVER the waters clear and dark
Flew, like a startled bird, our bark.

All the day long with steady sweep
Seagulls followed us over the deep.

Weird and strange were the silent shores,
Rich with their wealth of buried ores ;

Mighty the forests, old and gray,
With the secrets locked in their hearts away.

Semblance of castle and arch and shrine
Towered aloft in the clear sunshine ;

And we watched for the warder, stern and grim,
And the priest with his chanted prayer and hymn.

Over that wonderful northern sea,
As one who sails in a dream, sailed we,

Till, when the young moon soared on high,
Nothing was round us but wave and sky.

Up in the tremulous space it swung,—
A crescent dim in the azure hung ;

While the sun lay low in the glowing west,
With bars of purple across his breast.

The skies were aflame with the sunset glow,
The billows were all aflame below ;

The far horizon seemed the gate
To some mystic world's enchanted state ;

And all the air was a luminous mist,
Crimson and amber and amethyst.

Then silently into that fiery sea—
Into the heart of the mystery—

Three ships went sailing, one by one,
The fairest visions under the sun.

Like the flame in the heart of a ruby set
Were the sails that flew from each mast of jet ;

While darkly against the burning sky
Streamer and pennant floated high.

Steadily, silently, on they pressed
Into the glowing, reddening west ;

Until, on the far horizon's fold,
They slowly passed through its gate of gold.

You think, perhaps, they were nothing more
Than schooners laden with common ore ?

Where Care clasped hands with grimy Toil,
And the decks were stained with earthly moil ?

Oh, beautiful ships, that sailed that night
Into the west from our yearning sight,

Full well I know that the freight ye bore
Was laden not for an earthly shore !

To some far realm ye were sailing on,
Where all we have lost shall yet be won ;

Ye were bearing thither a world of dreams,
Bright as that sunset's golden gleams ;

And hopes whose tremulous, rosy flush,
Grew fairer still in the twilight hush.

Ye were bearing hence to that mystic sphere
Thoughts no mortal may utter here,—

Songs that on earth may not be sung,—
Words too holy for human tongue,—

The golden deeds that we would have done,—
The fadeless wreaths that we would have won!

And hence it was that our souls with you
Traversed the measureless waste of blue,

Till you passed under the sunset gate,
And to us a voice said, softly, " Wait ! "

MAUD AND MADGE

MAUD in a crimson velvet chair
Strings her pearls on a silken thread,
While, lovingly lifting her golden hair,
Soft airs wander about her head.
She has silken robes of the softest flow,
She has jewels rare and a chain of gold,
And her two white hands flit to and fro,
Fair as the dainty toys they hold.

She has tropical birds and rare perfumes ;
Pictures that speak to the heart and eye ;
For her each flower of the Orient blooms,—
For her the song and the lute swell high ;
But daintily stringing her gleaming pearls
She dreams to-day in her velvet chair,
While the sunlight sleeps in her golden curls,
Lightly stirred by the odorous air.

Down on the beach, when the tide goes out,
Madge is gathering shining shells ;
The sea-breeze blows her locks about ;
O'er bare, brown feet the white sand swells.
Coarsest serge is her gown of gray,
Faded and torn her apron blue,
And there in the beautiful, dying day
The girl still thinks of the work to do.

Stains of labor are on her hands,
Lost is the young form's airy grace ;
And standing there on the shining sands
You read her fate in her weary face.
Up with the dawn to toil all day
For meagre fare and a place to sleep ;
Seldom a moment to dream or play,
Little leisure to laugh or weep.

Beautiful Maud, you think, maybe,
Lying back in your velvet chair,
There is naught in common with her and thee,—
You scarce could breathe in the self-same air.
But the warm blood in her girlish heart
Leaps quick as yours at her nature's call,
And ye, though moving so far apart,
Must share one destiny after all.

Love shall come to you both one day,
For still must be what aye hath been ;
And under satin or russet gray
Hearts will open to let him in.
Motherhood with its joy and woe
Each must compass through burning pain,—
You, fair Maud, with your brow of snow,
Madge with her brown hands labor-stained.

Each shall sorrow and each shall weep,
Though one is in hovel, one in hall ;
Over your gold the frost shall creep,
As over her jet the snows will fall.
Exquisite Maud, you lift your eyes
At Madge out yonder under the sun ;
Yet know ye both by the countless ties
Of a common womanhood ye are one !

A MOTHER'S QUESTION

WHAT mother-angel tended thee last night,
Sweet baby mine ?
Cradled upon what breast all soft and white
Didst thou recline ?

Who took thee, frail and tender as thou art,
Within her arms ?
And shielded thee, close claspéd to her heart.
From all alarms ?

Surely that God who lured thee from the breast
That hoped to be
The softest pillow and the sweetest rest
Thenceforth to thee,

Sent thee not forth into the dread unknown
Without a guide,
To grope in darkness, treading all alone
The path untried.

Compassionate is He who called thee, child ;
And well I know
He sent some Blessed One of aspect mild
With thee to go

Through the dark valley, where the shadows dim
Forever brood,
That the low music of an angel's hymn
Might cheer the solitude !

OVER THE WALL

I KNOW a spot where the wild vines creep,
And the coral moss-cups grow,
And where, at the foot of the rocky steep,
The sweet blue violets blow.
There all day long, in the summer-time,
You may hear the river's dreamy rhyme ;
There all day long does the honey-bee
Murmur and hum in the hollow tree.

And there the feathery hemlock makes
A shadow cool and sweet,
While from its emerald wing it shakes
Rare incense at your feet.
There do the silvery lichens cling,
There does the tremulous harebell swing ;
And many a scarlet berry shines
Deep in the green of the tangled vines.

Over the wall at dawn of day,
Over the wall at noon,
Over the wall when the shadows say
That night is coming soon,
A little maiden with laughing eyes
Climbs in her eager haste, and hies
Down to the spot where the wild vines creep,
And violets bloom by the rocky steep.

All wild things love her. The murmuring bee
Scarce stirs when she draws near,
And sings the bird in the hemlock-tree
Its sweetest for her ear.
The harebells nod as she passes by,
The violet lifts its tender eye,
The low ferns bend her steps to greet,
And the mosses creep to her dancing feet.

Up in her pathway seems to spring
All that is sweet or rare,—
Chrysalis quaint, or the moth's bright wing,
Or flower-buds strangely fair.
She watches the tiniest bird's-nest hid
The thickly clustering leaves amid ;
And the small brown tree-toad on her arm
Quietly hops, and fears no harm.

Ah, child of the laughing eyes, and heart
Attuned to Nature's voice !
Thou hast found a bliss that will ne'er depart
While earth can say, "Rejoice !"
The years must come, and the years must go ;
But the flowers will bloom, and the breezes blow,
And bird and butterfly, moth and bee,
Bring on their swift wings joy to thee !

OUTGROWN

NAY, you wrong her, my friend, she's not fickle ; her love
 she has simply outgrown ;
One can read the whole matter, translating her heart by the
 light of one's own.

Can you bear me to talk with you frankly ? There is much
 that my heart would say,
And you know we were children together, have quarreled
 and "made up" in play.

And so, for the sake of old friendship, I venture to tell you
 the truth,
As plainly, perhaps, and as bluntly, as I might in our earlier
 youth.

Five summers ago, when you wooed her, you stood on the
 self-same plane,
Face to face, heart to heart, never dreaming your souls
 could be parted again.

She loved you at that time entirely, in the bloom of her
 life's early May,
And it is not her fault, I repeat it, that she does not love
 you to-day.

Nature never stands still, nor souls either. They ever go up
 or go down ;
And hers has been steadily soaring,—but how has it been
 with your own ?

She has struggled, and yearned, and aspired,—grown
stronger and wiser each year ;
The stars are not farther above you, in yon luminous at-
mosphere !

For she whom you crowned with fresh roses, down yonder,
five summers ago,
Has learned that the first of our duties to God and our-
selves is to grow.

Her eyes they are sweeter and calmer, but their vision is
clearer as well ;
Her voice has a tenderer cadence, but it rings like a silver
bell.

Her face has the look worn by those who with God and his
angels have talked ;
The white robes she wears are less white than the spirits
with whom she has walked.

And you ? Have you aimed at the highest ? Have you,
too, aspired and prayed ?
Have you looked upon evil unsullied ? have you conquered
it undismayed ?

Have you, too, grown stronger and wiser, as the months and
the years have rolled on ?
Did you meet her this morning rejoicing in the triumph of
victory won ?

Nay, hear me ! The truth cannot harm you. When to-day
in her presence you stood,
Was the hand that you gave her as white and clean as that
of her womanhood ?

Go measure yourself by her standard. Look back on the
years that have fled ;
Then ask, if you need, why she tells you that the love of her
girlhood is dead !

She cannot look down to her lover ; her love, like her soul,
aspires ;
He must stand by her side, or above her, who would kindle
its holy fires.

Now, farewell ! For the sake of old friendship I have
ventured to tell you the truth,
As plainly, perhaps, and as bluntly, as I might in our earlier
youth.

A SONG FOR TWO

NOT for its sunsets burning clear and low,
 Its purple splendors on the eastern hills,
Bless I the Year that now makes haste to go
 While sad Earth listens for its dying thrills.

Not that its days were sweet with sun and showers ;
 Its summer nights all luminous with stars :
Not that its vales were studded thick with flowers ;
 Not that its mountains pierced the azure bars ;

Not that from our dear land, by slow degrees,
 Some mists of error it hath blown away ;
Not for its noble deeds—ah ! not for these—
 Fain would I twine this wreath of song to-day.

But for one gift that it has brought to me
 My grateful heart would crown the dying Year :
Because, O best-beloved, it gave me thee,
 I drop this garland on the passing bier !

A PICTURE

A LOVELY bit of dappled green
Shut in the circling hills between,
While farther off blue mountains stand
Like giant guards on either hand.

The quiet road in still repose
Follows where'er the river flows;
And in and out it glides along,
Enchanted by the rippling song.

Afar, I see the steepled town
From yonder hillside looking down;
And sometimes, when the south wind swells,
Hear the faint chiming of its bells.

But under these embowering trees,
Lulled by the hum of droning bees,
The old brown farmhouse seems to sleep,
So calm its rest is and so deep.

Yonder, beside the rustic bridge,
From which the path climbs yonder ridge,
The lazy cattle seek the shade
By the umbrageous willows made.

The sky is like a hollow pearl,
Save where warm sunset clouds unfurl
Their flaming colors. Lo! a star,
Even as I gaze, gleams forth afar!

HYMN TO LIFE

AH, Life, dear Life, how beautiful art thou !
All day sweet, chiming voices in my heart
Have hymned thy praises joyfully as now,
Telling how fair thou art !

This morn, while yet the dew was on the flowers,
They sang like skylarks, soaring while they sing ;
This noon, like birds within their leafy bowers,
Warbled with folded wing.

Slow fades the twilight from the glowing west,
And one pale star hangs o'er yon mountain's brow ;
With deeper joy, that may not be repressed,
O Life, they hail thee now !

And not alone from this poor heart of mine
Do these glad notes of grateful love ascend ;
Voices from mount and vale and woodland shrine
In the full chorus blend.

The young leaves feel thy presence and rejoice
The while they frolic with the happy breeze ;
And pæans sweeter than a seraph's voice
Rise from the swaying trees.

Each flower that hides within the forest dim,
Where mortal eye may ne'er its beauty see,
Waves its light censer, while it breathes a hymn
In humble praise of thee.

Through quivering pines the gentle south winds stray,
Singing low songs that bid the tear-drops start ;
And thoughts of thee are in each trembling lay,
Thrilling the listener's heart.

Old Ocean lifts his solemn voice on high,
Thy name, O Life, repeating evermore,
While sweeping gales and rushing storms reply
From many a far-off shore.

The stars are gathering in the darkening skies,
But our dull ears their music may not hear,
Though, while we list, their swelling anthems rise
Exultingly and clear !

O Earth is beautiful ! She weareth still
The golden radiance of life's early day ;
Still Love and Hope for me their chalice fill,—
Life, turn not thou away !

THE CHIMNEY SWALLOW

ONE night as I sat by my table,
Tired of books and pen,
With wandering thoughts far straying
Out into the world of men ;—
That world where the busy workers
Such magical deeds are doing,
Each one with a steady purpose
His own pet plans pursuing ;

When the house was wrapt in silence,
And the children were all asleep,
And even the mouse in the wainscot
Had ceased to run and leap,
All at once from the open chimney
Came a hum and a rustle and whirring,
That startled me out of my dreaming,
And set my pulses stirring.

What was it ? I paused and listened ;
The roses were all in bloom,
And in from the garden floated
The violet's rich perfume.
So it could not be Kriss Kringle,
For he only comes, you know,
When the Christmas bells are chiming,
And the hills are white with snow.

Hark ! a sound as of rushing waters,
Or the rustle of falling leaves,
Or the patter of eager raindrops
Yonder among the eaves !
Then out from the dark, old chimney,
Blackened with soot and smoke,
With a whirl of fluttering pinions
A startled birdling broke.

Dashing against the window ;
Lighting a moment where
My sculptured angel folded
Its soft white wings in prayer ;
Swinging upon the curtains ;
Perched on the ivy-vine ;
At last it rested trembling
In tender hands of mine.

No stain upon its plumage ;
No dust upon its wings ;
No hint of its companionship
With darkly soiling things !
O, happy bird, thou spirit !
Stretch thy glad plumes and soar
Where breath of soil or sorrow
Shall reach thee nevermore !

HEIRSHIP

LITTLE store of wealth have I ;
Not a rood of land I own ;
Nor a mansion fair and high
Built with towers of fretted stone.
Stocks, nor bonds, nor title-deeds,
Flocks nor herds have I to show ;
When I ride, no Arab steeds
Toss for me their manes of snow.

I have neither pearls nor gold,
Massive plate, nor jewels rare ;
Brodered silks of worth untold,
Nor rich robes a queen might wear.
In my garden's narrow bound
Flaunt no costly tropic blooms,
Ladening all the air around
With a weight of rare perfumes.

Yet to an immense estate
Am I heir, by grace of God,—
Richer, grander than doth wait
Any earthly monarch's nod.
Heir of all the Ages, I—
Heir of all that they have wrought,
All their store of emprise high,
All their wealth of precious thought.

Every golden deed of theirs
Sheds its lustre on my way ;
All their labors, all their prayers,
Sanctify this present day !
Heir of all that they have earned
By their passion and their tears,—
Heir of all that they have learned
Through the weary, toiling years !

Heir of all the faith sublime
On whose wings they soared to heaven ;
Heir of every hope that Time
To Earth's fainting sons hath given !
Aspirations pure and high—
Strength to dare and to endure—
Heir of all the Ages, I—
Lo ! I am no longer poor !

HILDA, SPINNING

SPINNING, spinning, by the sea,
All the night !
On a stormy, rock-ribbed shore,
Where the north winds downward pour,
And the tempests fiercely sweep
From the mountains to the deep,
Hilda spins beside the sea,
All the night !

Spinning, at her lonely window,
By the sea !
With her candle burning clear,
Every night of all the year,
And her sweet voice crooning low,
Quaint old songs of love and woe,
Spins she at her lonely window,
By the sea.

On a bitter night in March,
Long ago,
Hilda, very young and fair,
With a crown of golden hair,
Watched the tempest raging wild,
Watched the roaring sea—and smiled
Through that woeful night in March,
Long ago !

What though all the winds were out
In their might ?
Richard's boat was tried and true ;
Stanch and brave his hardy crew ;
Strongest he to do or dare.
Said she, breathing forth a prayer,
" He is safe, though winds are out
In their might ! "

But at length the morning dawned,
Still and clear !
Calm, in azure splendor, lay
All the waters of the bay ;
And the ocean's angry moans
Sank to solemn undertones,
As at last the morning dawned,
Still and clear !

With her waves of golden hair
Floating free,
Hilda ran along the shore,
Gazing off the waters o'er ;
And the fishermen replied,
" He will come in with the tide,"
As they saw her golden hair
Floating free !

Ah ! he came in with the tide—
Came alone !
Tossed upon the shining sands—
Ghastly face and clutching hands—
Seaweed tangled in his hair—
Bruised and torn his forehead fair—
Thus he came in with the tide,
All alone !

Hilda watched beside her dead,
Day and night.
Of those hours of mortal woe
Human ken may never know ;
She was silent, and his ear
Kept the secret, close and dear,
Of her watch beside her dead,
Day and night !

What she promised in the darkness,
Who can tell ?
But upon that rock-ribbed shore
Burns a beacon evermore !
And beside it, all the night,
Hilda guards the lonely light,
Though what vowed she in the darkness,
None may tell !

Spinning, spinning by the sea,
All the night !
While her candle, gleaming wide
O'er the restless, rolling tide,
Guides with steady, changeless ray
The lone fisher up the bay,
Hilda spins beside the sea,
Through the night !

Fifty years of patient spinning
By the sea !
Old and worn, she sleeps to-day,
While the sunshine gilds the bay ;
But her candle, shining clear,
Every night of all the year,
Still is telling of her spinning
By the sea !

HEREAFTER

O LAND beyond the setting sun !
O realm more fair than poet's dream !
How clear thy silver rivers run,
How bright thy golden glories gleam !

Earth holds no counterpart of thine ;
The dark-browed Orient, jewel-crowned,
Pales as she bows before thy shrine,
Shrouded in mystery profound.

The dazzling North, the stately West,
Whose waters flow from mount to sea ;
The South, flower-wreathed in languid rest—
What are they all, compared with thee ?

All lands, all realms beneath yon dome,
Where God's own hand hath hung the stars,
To thee with humblest homage come,
O world beyond the crystal bars !

Thou blest Hereafter ! Mortal tongue
Hath striven in vain thy speech to learn,
And Fancy wanders, lost among
The flowery paths for which we yearn.

But well we know that fair and bright,
Far beyond human ken or dream,
Too glorious for our feeble sight,
Thy skies of cloudless azure beam.

We know thy happy valleys lie
In green repose, supremely blest ;
We know against thy sapphire sky
Thy mountain-peaks sublimely rest.

For sometimes even now we catch
Faint gleamings from thy far-off shore,
While still with eager eyes we watch
For one sweet sign or token more.

The loved, the deeply loved, are there !
The brave, the fair, the good, the wise,
Who pined for thy serener air,
Nor shunned thy solemn mysteries.

There are the hopes that, one by one,
Died even as we gave them birth ;
The dreams that passed ere well begun,
Too dear, too beautiful for earth.

The aspirations, strong of wing,
Aiming at heights we could not reach ;
The songs we tried in vain to sing ;
The thoughts too vast for human speech ;

Thou hast them all, Hereafter ! Thou
Shalt keep them safely till that hour
When, with God's seal on heart and brow,
We claim them in immortal power !

WITHOUT AND WITHIN

SOFTLY the gold has faded from the sky,
Slowly the stars have gathered one by one,
Calmly the crescent moon mounts up on high,
And the long day is done.

With quiet heart my garden-walks I tread,
Feeling the beauty that I cannot see ;
Beauty and fragrance all around me shed
By flower, and shrub, and tree.

Often I linger where the roses pour
Exquisite odors from each glowing cup ;
Or where the violet, brimmed with sweetness o'er,
Lifts its small chalice up.

With fragrant breath the lilies woo me now,
And softly speaks the sweet-voiced mignonette,
While heliotropes, with meekly lifted brow,
Say to me, " Go not yet."

So for awhile I linger, but not long.
High in the heavens rideth fiery Mars,
Careering proudly 'mid the glorious throng,
Brightest of all the stars.

But softly gleaming through the curtain's fold,
The home-star beams with more alluring ray,
And, as a star led sage and seer of old,
So it directs my way ;

And leads me in where my young children lie,
 Rosy and beautiful in tranquil rest ;
The seal of sleep is on each fast-shut eye,
 Heaven's peace within each breast.

I bring them gifts. Not frankincense nor myrrh—
 Gifts the adoring Magi humbly brought
The young child, cradled in the arms of her
 Blest beyond mortal thought ;

But love—the love that fills my mother-heart
 With a sweet rapture oft akin to pain ;
Such yearning love as bids the tear-drops start
 And fall like summer rain.

And faith—that dares, for their dear sakes, to climb
 Boldly, where once it would have feared to go,
And calmly standing upon heights sublime,
 Fears not the storm below.

And prayer ! O God ! unto thy throne I come,
 Bringing my darlings—but I cannot speak.
With love and awe oppressed, my lips are dumb :
 Grant what my heart would seek !

VASHTI'S SCROLL

DETHRONED and crownless; I so late a queen !
Forsaken, poor and lonely, I who wore
The crown of Persia with such stately grace !
But yesterday a royal wife ; but now
From my estate cast down, and fallen so low
That beggars scoff at me ! Men toss my name
Backward and forward on their mocking tongues.
In all the king's broad realm there is not one
To do poor Vashti homage. Even the dog
My hand had fondled, in the palace walls
Fawns on my rival. When I left the court,
Weeping and sore distressed, he followed me,
Licking my fingers, leaping in my face,
And frisking round me till I reached the gates.
Then with long pauses, as of one perplexed,
And frequent lookings backward, and low whines
Of puzzled wonder—that had made me smile
If I had been less lorn—with drooping ears,
Dropt eyes, and downcast forehead he went back,
Leaving me desolate. So went they all
Who, when Ahasuerus on my brow
Set his own royal crown and called me queen,
Made the air ring with plaudits ! Loud they cried,
“ Long live Queen Vashti, Persia's fairest Rose,
Mother of Princes, and the nation's Hope ! ”
The rose is withered now ; the queen's no more.
To these lorn breasts no princely boy shall cling
Or now, or ever. Yet on this poor scroll

I will rehearse the story of my woes,
And bid them lay it in the grave with me
When I depart to join the unnumbered dead.

Oh, thou unknown, unborn, who through the gloom
And mists of ages in my vaulted tomb
Shalt find this parchment, and with reverent care
Shalt bear it outward to the sun and air :
Oh, thou whose patient fingers shall unroll
With slow, persuasive touch this little scroll :
Oh, loving, tender eyes that, like twin stars,
I seem to see through yonder cloudy bars :
Read Vashti's story, and I pray ye tell
The whole wide world if she did ill or well !

Ahasuerus reigned. On Persia's throne,
Lord of a mighty realm, he sat alone,
And stretched his sceptre from the farthest slope
Of India's hills, to where the Ethiop
Dwelt in barbaric splendor. Kinglier king
Never did poet praise or minstrel sing !
He had no peers. Among his lords he shone
As shines a planet, single and alone ;
And I, alas ! I loved him, and we two
Such bliss as peasant lovers joy in, knew !
No lowly home in all our wide domain
Held more of peace than ours, or less of pain.
But one dark day—O, woeful day of days,
Whose hours I number now in sad amaze,
Thou hadst no prophet of the ills to be,
Nor sign nor omen came to succor me !—
That day Ahasuerus smiled and said,
“ Since first I wore this crown upon my head
Thrice have the emerald clusters of the vine
Changed to translucent globes of ruby wine ;

And thrice the peaches on the loaded walls
Have slowly rounded into wondrous balls
Of gold and crimson. I will make a feast.
Princes and lords, the greatest and the least,
All Persia and all Media, shall see
The pomp and splendor that encompass me.
The riches of my kingdom shall be shown,
And all my glorious majesty made known
Where'er the shadow of my sceptred hand
Sways a great people with its mute command ! ”
Then came from far and near a hurrying throng
Of skilled and cunning workmen. All day long
And far into the startled night, they wrought
Most quaint and beautiful devices—still
Responsive to their master's eager will,
And giving form to his creative thought—
Till Shushan grew a marvel !

Never yet

Yon rolling sun on fairer scene has set :
The palace windows were ablaze with light ;
And Persia's lords were there, most richly dight
In brodered silks, or costliest cloth of gold,
That kept the sunshine in each lustrous fold,
Or softly flowing tissues, pure and white
As fleecy clouds at noonday. Clear and bright
Shone the pure gold of Ophir, and the gleam
Of burning gems, that mocked the pallid beam
Of the dim, wondering stars, made radiance there,
Splendor undreamed of, and beyond compare !
Up from the gardens floated the perfume
Of rose and myrtle, in their perfect bloom ;
The red pomegranate cleft its heart in twain,
Pouring its life blood in a crimson rain ;
The slight acacia waved its yellow plumes,
And afar off amid the starlit glooms

Were sweet recesses, where the orange bowers
Dropt their pure blossoms down in snowy showers,
And night reigned undisturbed.

From cups of gold
Diverse one from another, meet to hold
The king's most costly wines, or to be raised
To princely lips, the gay guests drank, and praised
Their rich abundance. Rapturous music swept
Through the vast arches and the secret kept
Of its own joy ; while in slow, rhythmic time
To clash of cymbal and the lute's clear chime,
The dancing-girls stole through the fragrant night
With wreathed arms, flushed cheeks and eyes alight,
And softly rounded forms that rose and fell
To the voluptuous music's dreamy swell,
As if the air were pulsing waves that bore
Them up and onward to some longed-for shore !

Wild waxed the revel. On an ivory throne
Inlaid with ebony and gems that shone
With a surpassing lustre, sat my lord,
The King Ahasuerus. His great sword,
Blazing with diamonds on hilt and blade,—
The mighty sword that made his foes afraid,—
And the proud sceptre he was wont to grasp,
With all the monarch in his kingly clasp,
Against the crouching lions (guard that kept
On either side the throne and never slept),
Leaned carelessly. And flowing downward o'er
The ivory steps even to the marble floor,
Swept the rich royal robes in many a fold
Of Tyrian purple flecked with yellow gold.
The jewelled crown his young head scorned to wear,
More fitly crowned by its own clustering hair,
Lay on a pearl-wrought cushion by his side,

Mute symbol of great Persia's power and pride ;
While on his brow some courtier's hand had placed
The fairest chaplet monarch ever graced,
A wreath of dewy roses, fresh and sweet,
Just brought from out the garden's cool retreat.

Louder and louder grew the sounds of mirth ;
Faster and faster flowed the red wine forth ;
In high, exulting strains the minstrels sang
The monarch's glory, till the great roof rang ;
And flushed at length with pride and song and wine,
The king rose up and said, " O nobles mine !
Princes of Persia, Media's hope and pride,
Stars of my kingdom, will ye aught beside ?
Speak ! and I swear your sovereign's will shall be
On this fair night to please and honor ye ! "
Then rose a shout from out the glittering throng
Drowning the voice of merriment and song.
Humming and murmuring like a hive of bees—
What would they more each charmed sense to please ?

Out spoke at last a tongue that should have been
Palsied in foul dishonor there and then.
" O great Ahasuerus ! ne'er before
Reigned such a king so blest a people o'er !
What shall we ask ? What great and wondrous boon
To crown the hours that fly away too soon ?
There is but one. 'Tis said that mortal eyes
Never yet gazed, in rapturous surprise,
Upon a face like that of her who wears
Thy signet-ring, and all thy glory shares,—
Thy fair Queen Vashti, she who yet shall be
Mother of him who reigneth after thee !
Show us that face, O king ! For nought beside
Can make our cup of joy o'erflow with pride."

A murmur ran throughout the startled crowd,
Swelling at last to plaudits long and loud.
Maddened with wine, they knew not what they said.
Ahasuerus bent his haughty head,
And for an instant o'er his face there swept
A look his courtiers in their memory kept
For many a day—a look of doubt and pain,
They scarcely caught ere it had passed again.
“My word is pledged,” he said. Then to the seven
Lord chamberlains to whom the keys were given :
“Haste ye, and to this noble presence bring
Vashti, the Queen, with royal crown and ring ;
That all my lords may see the matchless charms
Kind Heaven has sent to bless my kingly arms.”

They did their errand, those old, gray-haired men,
Who should have braved the lion in his den,
Or ere they bore such message to their queen,
Or took such words their aged lips between.
What ! I, the daughter of a royal race,
Step down, unblushing, from my lofty place,
And, like a common dancing-girl, who wears
Her beauty unconcealed, and, shameless, bares
Her brow to every gazer, boldly go
To those wild revellers my face to show ?
I—who had kept my beauty pure and bright
Only because 'twas precious in his sight,
Guarding it ever as a holy thing,
Sacred to him, my lover, lord, and king,—
Could I unveil it to the curious eyes
Of the mad rabble that with drunken cries
Were shouting “Vashti ! Vashti ?”—Sooner far,
Beyond the rays of sun, or moon, or star,
I would have buried it in endless night !
Pale and dismayed, in wonder and affright,

My maidens hung around me as I told
Those seven lord chamberlains, so gray and old,
To bear this answer back : " It may not be.
My lord, my king, I cannot come to thee.
It is not meet that Persia's queen, like one
Who treads the market-place from sun to sun,
Should bare her beauty to the hungry crowd,
Who name her name in accents hoarse and loud."
With stern, cold looks they left me. Ah ! I knew
If my dear lord to his best self were true,
That he would hold me guiltless, and would say,
" I thank thee, love, that thou didst not obey ! "
But the red wine was ruling o'er his brain ;
The cruel wine that recked not of my pain.
Up from the angry throng a clamor rose ;
The flattering sycophants were now my foes ;
And evil counsellors about the throne,
Hiding the jealous joy they dared not own,
With slow, wise words, and many a virtuous frown,
Said, " Be the queen from her estate cast down !
Let her not see the king's face evermore, -
Nor come within his presence as of yore ;
So disobedient wives through all the land
Shall read the lesson, heed and understand."
Up spoke another, eager to be heard,
In royal councils fain to have a word,—
" Let this commandment of the king be writ,
In the law of the Medes and Persians, as it fit,—
The perfect law that man may alter not
Nor of its bitter end abate one jot."
Alas ! the king was wroth. Before his face
I could not go to plead my piteous case ;
But, pitiless, with scarce dissembled sneers,
And poisoned words that rankled in his ears,
My wily foes, afraid to let him pause,

Brought the great book that held the Persian laws,
And ere the rising of the morrow's sun,
My bitter doom was sealed, the deed was done !

Scarce had two moons passed when one dreary night
I sat within my bower in woeful plight,
When suddenly upon my presence stole
A muffled form, whose shadow stirred my soul
I knew not wherefore. Ere my tongue could speak,
Or with a breath the brooding silence break,
A low voice murmured " Vashti ! "

Pale and still,

Hushing my heart's cry with an iron will,
" What would the king ? " I asked. No answer came,
But to his sad eyes leaped a sudden flame ;
With clasping arms he raised me to his breast
And on my brow and lips such kisses pressed
As one might give the dead. I may not tell
All the wild words that I remember well.
Oh ! was it joy or was it pain to know
That not alone I wept my weary woe ?
Alas ! I know not. But I know to-day—
If this be sin, forgive me, Heaven, I pray !—
That though his eyes have never looked on mine
Since that dark night when stars refused to shine,
And fair Queen Esther sits, a beauteous bride,
In stately Shushan at the monarch's side,
The king remembers Vashti, even yet
Breathing her name sometimes with vain regret,
Or murmuring, haply, in a whisper low,—
" O pure, proud heart that loved me long ago ! "

WHAT MY FRIEND SAID TO ME

TROUBLE? dear friend, I know her not. God sent
His angel Sorrow on my heart to lay
Her hand in benediction, and to say,
“Restore, O child, that which thy Father lent,
For He doth now recall it,” long ago.

His blessed angel Sorrow! She has walked
For years beside me, and we two have talked
As chosen friends together. Thus I know
Trouble and Sorrow are not near of kin.

Trouble distrusteth God, and ever wears
Upon her brow the seal of many cares;
But Sorrow oft hast deepest peace within.
She sits with Patience in perpetual calm,
Waiting till Heaven shall send the healing balm.

HYMN

FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CEMETERY

YE Pines, with solemn grandeur crowned,
Put on your priestly robes to-day ;
Henceforth ye stand on holy ground,
Where Love and Death hold equal sway.

Lift up to Heaven each crested head,
And raise your giant arms on high,
And swear that o'er our slumbering dead
Ye will keep watch and ward for aye.

For month by month, and year by year,
While shine the stars, and rolls the sea,
Our silent ones shall gather here,
To rest beneath the greenwood tree.

Here no rude sight nor sound shall break
The calmness of their last, long sleep,
And Earth and Heaven, for Love's sweet sake,
Shall o'er them ceaseless vigils keep.

Our silent ones ! Their very dust
Is precious in our longing eyes ;
O, guard ye well the sacred trust,
Till God's own voice shall bid them rise !

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

BUT yesterday among us here,
One with ourselves in hope and fear :
Joying like us in little things,
The sheen of gorgeous insect wings,
The song of bird, the hum of bee,
The white foam of the heaving sea.

But yesterday your simplest speech,
Your lightest breath, our hearts could reach ;
Your very thoughts were ours. Our eyes
Found in your own no mysteries.
Your griefs, your joys, your prayers, we knew,
The hopes that with your girlhood grew.

But yesterday we dared to say,
“ ’Twere better you should walk this way
Or that, dear child ! Do thus or so ;
Older and wiser we, you know.”
We gave you flowers and curled your hair,
And brought new robes for you to wear.

To-day how far away thou art !
In all thy life we have no part.
Hast thou a want ? We know it not ;
Utterly parted from our lot,
The veriest stranger is to thee
All those who loved thee best can be.

Deaf to our calls, our prayers, our cries,
Thou dost not lift thy heavy eyes ;
Nor heed the tender words that flow
From lips whose kisses thrilled thee so
But yesterday ! To-day in vain
We wait for kisses back again.

To-day no awful mystery hid
The dark and mazy past amid
Is half so great as this that lies
Beneath the lids of thy shut eyes,
And in those frozen lips of stone,
Impassive lips, that smile nor moan.

But yesterday with loving care
We petted, praised thee, called thee fair ;
To-day, oppressed with awe, we stand
Before that ring-unfettered hand,
And scarcely dare to lift one tress
In mute and reverent caress.

But yesterday with us. To-day
Where thou art dwelling, who can say ?
In heaven ? But where ? Oh for some spell
To make thy tongue this secret tell !
To break the silence strange and deep,
That thy sealed lips so closely keep !

LYRIC

FOR THE DEDICATION OF A MUSIC-HALL

No grand Cathedral's vaulted space
Where, through the "dim, religious light,"
Gleam pictured saint and cross and crown,
We consecrate with song to-night ;

No stately temple lifting high
Its dome against the starlit skies,
Where lofty arch and glittering spire
Like miracles of beauty rise.

Yet here beneath this humbler roof
With reverent hearts and lips we come ;
Hail, music ! Song and Beauty, hail !
Henceforth be these poor walls your home.

Here speak to hearts that long have yearned
Your presence and your spells to know ;
Here touch the lips athirst to drink
Where your perennial fountains flow.

Here, where our glorious mountain-peaks
Sublimely pierce the ether blue,
Lift ye our souls, and bid them rise
In aspirations grand and true !

O Music, Art, and Science, hail !

We greet you now with glad acclaims ;

Ye bay-crowned ones ! the listening air

Waits to re-echo with your names ;

Waits for your voices ringing clear

Above this weary, work-day world ;

Waits till ye bid fair Truth arise,

While Error from her throne is hurled !

WHAT I LOST

WANDERING in the dewy twilight
Of a golden summer day,
When the mists upon the mountains
Flushed with purple splendor lay :
When the sunlight kissed the hilltops
And the vales were hushed and dim,
And from out the forest arches
Rose a holy vesper hymn—
I lost something. Have you seen it,
Children, ye who passed that way ?
Did you chance to find the treasure
That I lost that summer day ?

It was neither gold nor silver,
Orient pearl nor jewel rare ;
Neither amethyst nor ruby,
Nor an opal gleaming fair ;
'Twas no curious, quaint mosaic
Wrought by cunning master-hands,
Nor a cameo where Hebe,
Crowned with deathless beauty, stands.
Yet have I lost something precious ;
Children, ye who passed that way—
Tell me, have you found the treasure
That I lost one summer day ?

Then, you say, it was a casket
Filled with India's perfumes rare,

Or a tiny flask of crystal
 Meet the rose's breath to bear ;
Or a bird of wondrous plumage,
 With a voice of sweetest tone,
That, escaping from my bosom,
 To the greenwood deep has flown.
Ah ! not these, I answer vainly ;
 Children, ye who passed that way,
Ye can never find the treasure
 That I lost that summer day !

You may call it bird or blossom ;
 Name my treasure what you will ;
Here no more its song or fragrance
 Shall my soul with rapture fill.
But, thank God ! our earthly losses
 In no darksome void are cast ;
Safely garnered, some to-morrow
 Shall restore them all at last.
Somewhere in the great hereafter,
 Children, ye who pass this way,
I shall find again the treasure
 That I lost one summer day !

ONCE !

ONCE in your sight,
As May buds swell in the sun's warm light,
So grew her soul,
Yielding itself to your sweet control.

Once if you spoke,
Echoing strains in her heart awoke,
Sending a thrill
All through its chambers sweet and still.

Once if you said,
" Sweet, with Love's garland I crown your head,"
Ah ! how the rose
Flooded her forehead's pale repose !

Once if your lip
Dared the pure sweetness of hers to sip,
Softly and meek
Dark lashes drooped on a white rose cheek !

Once if your name
Some one but whispered, a sudden flame
Burned on her cheek,
Telling a story she would not speak !

You do but wait
At a sepulchre's sealed gate !
Her love is dead,
Bound hand and foot in its narrow bed.

Why did it die ?
Ask of your soul the reason why !
Question it well,
And surely the secret it will tell.

But if your heart
Ever again plays the lover's part,
Let this truth be
Blent with the solemn mystery :

Pure flame aspires ;
Downward flow not the altar fires ;
And skylarks soar
Up where the earth-mists vex no more.

Now loose your hold
From her white garment's spotless fold,
And let her pass—
While both hearts murmur, "Alas ! alas !"

CATHARINE

O WONDROUS mystery of death !

I yield me to thine awful sway,
And with hushed heart and bated breath
Bow down before thy shrine to-day !

But yesterday these pallid lips
Breathed reverently my humble name ;
These eyes now closed in drear eclipse
Brightened with gratitude's soft flame.

These poor, pale hands were swift to do
The lowliest service I might ask ;
These palsied feet the long day through
Moved gladly to each wonted task.

O faithful, patient, loving one,
Who from earth's great ones shrank afar,
Canst bear the presence of The Son,
And dwell where holy angels are ?

Dost thou not meekly bow thine head,
And stand apart with humblest mien,
Nor dare with softest step to tread
The ranks of shining Ones between ?

Dost thou not kneel with downcast eyes
The hem of some white robe to touch,
While on thine own meek forehead lies
The crown of her who " lovèd much ? "

O vain imaginings ! To-day
Earth's loftiest prince is not thy peer.
Come, Sage and Seer ! mute homage pay
To this Pale Wonder lying here !

THE NAME

I KNOW not by what name to call thee, thou
Who reignest supreme, sole sovereign of my heart !
Thou who the lode-star of my being art,
Thou before whom my soul delights to bow !
What shall I call thee ? Teach me some dear name
Better than all the rest, that I may pour
All that the years have taught me of love's lore
In one fond word. " Lover ? " But that's too tame,
And " Friend " 's too cold, though thou art both to me.
Art thou my King ? Kings sit enthroned afar,
And crowns less meet for love than reverence are,
While both my heart gives joyfully to thee.
Art thou—but, ah ! I'll cease the idle quest :
I cannot tell what name befits thee best !

UNDER THE PALM-TREES

WE were children together, you and I ;
We trod the same paths in days of old ;
Together we watched the sunset sky,
And counted its bars of massive gold.
And when from the dark horizon's brim
The moon stole up with its silver rim,
And slowly sailed through the fields of air,
We thought there was nothing on earth so fair.

You walk to-night where the jasmines grow,
And the Cross looks down from the tropic skies ;
Where the spicy breezes softly blow,
And the slender shafts of the palm-trees rise.
You breathe the breath of the orange-flowers,
And the perfumed air of the myrtle-bowers ;
You pluck the acacia's golden balls,
And mark where the red pomegranate falls.

I stand to-night on the breezy hill,
Where the pine-trees sing as they sang of yore ;
The north star burneth clear and still,
And the moonbeams silver your father's door.
I can see the hound as he lies asleep,
In the shadow close by the old well-sweep,
And hear the river's murmuring flow
As we two heard it long ago.

Do you think of the firs on the mountain-side
As you walk to-night where the palm-trees grow ?
Of the brook where the trout in the darkness hide ?
Of the yellow willows waving slow ?
Do you long to drink of the crystal spring,
In the dell where the purple harebells swing ?
Would your pulses leap could you hear once more
The sound of the flail on the threshing-floor ?

Ah ! the years are long, and the world is wide,
And the salt sea rolls our hearts between ;
And never again at eventide
Shall we two gaze on the same fair scene.
But under the palm-trees wandering slow,
You think of the spreading elms I know ;
And you deem our daisies fairer far
Than the gorgeous blooms of the tropics are !

NIGHT AND MORNING

I.

NIGHT and darkness over all !
Nature sleeps beneath a pall ;
Not a ray from moon or stars
Glimmers through the cloudy bars ;
Huge and black the mountains stand
Frowning upon either hand,
And the river, dark and deep,
Gropes its way from steep to steep.
Yonder tree, whose young leaves played
In the sunshine and the shade,
Stretches out its arms like one
Sudden blindness hath undone.
Pale and dim the rose-queen lies
Robbed of all her gorgeous dyes,
And the lily bendeth low,
Mourner in a garb of woe.
Never a shadow comes or goes,
Never a gleam its glory throws
Over cottage or over hall—
Darkness broodeth over all !

II.

Lo ! the glorious morning breaks !
Nature from her sleep awakes,
And, in purple pomp, the day
Bids the darkness flee away.

Crowned with light the mountains stand
Royally on either hand,
And the laughing waters run
In glad haste to meet the sun.
Stately trees, exultant, raise
Their proud heads in grateful praise ;
Flowers, dew-laden, everywhere
Pour rich incense on the air,
And the ascending vapors rise
Like the smoke of sacrifice.
Birds are trilling, bees are humming,
Swift to greet the new day coming,
And earth's myriad voices sing
Hymns of grateful welcoming.
Bursting from night's heavy thrall,
Heaven's own light is over all !

AGNES

AGNES ! Agnes ! is it thus
Thou, at last, dost come to us ?
From the land of balm and bloom,
Blandest airs and sweet perfume,
Where the jasmine's golden stars
Glimmer soft through emerald bars,
And the fragrant orange flowers
Fall to earth in silver showers,

Agnes ! Agnes !

With thy pale hands on thy breast,
Comest thou here to take thy rest ?

Agnes ! Agnes ! o'er thy grave
Loud the winter winds will rave,
And the snow fall fast around,
Heaping high thy burial mound ;
Yet, within its soft embrace,
Thy dear form and earnest face,
Wrapt away from burning pain,
Ne'er shall know one pang again.

Agnes ! Agnes !

Nevermore shall anguish vex thee,
Nevermore shall care perplex thee.

Agnes ! Agnes ! wait, ah ! wait
Just one moment at the gate,
Ere your pure feet enter in
Where is neither pain nor sin.

Thou art blest, but how shall we
Bear the pang of losing thee ?
List ! *we love thee !* By that word
Once thy heart of hearts was stirred.

Agnes ! Agnes !

By that love we bid thee wait
Just one moment at the gate !

Agnes ! Agnes ! No ! Pass on
To the heaven that thou hast won !
By thy life of brave endeavor,
Up the heights aspiring ever,
Whence thy voice, like clarion clear,
Rang out words of lofty cheer ;
By thy laboring not in vain,
By thy martyrdom of pain,

Our Saint Agnes—

From our yearning sight pass on
To the rest that thou hast won !

“INTO THY HANDS ”

INTO thy hands, O Father ! Now at last,
Weary with struggling and with long unrest,
Vext by remembrances of conflicts past
And by a host of present cares opprest,

I come to thee and cry, Thy will be done !
Take thou the burden I have borne too long.
Into thy hands, O mighty, loving One,
My weakness gives its all, for thou art strong !

For life—for death. I cannot see the way ;
I blindly wander on to meet the night ;
The path grows steeper, and the dying day
Soon with its shadows will shut out the light.

Hold thou my hand, O Father ! I am tired
As a young child that wearies of the road ;
And the far heights toward which I once aspired
Have lost the glory with which erst they glowed.

Take thou my life, and mold it to thy will ;
Into thy hands commit I all my way ;
Fain would I lift each cup that thou dost fill,
Nor from its brim my pale lips ever stay.

Take thou my life. I lay it at thy feet ;
And in my death my sure support be thou ;
So shall I sink to slumber calm and sweet,
And wake at morn before thy face to bow !

IDLE WORDS

I.

ONCE I said,
Seeing two soft, starry eyes
Darkly bright as midnight skies,—
Eyes prophetic of the power
Sure to be thy woman's dower,
When the years should crown thee queen
Of the realm as yet unseen,—
“Some time, sweet, those eyes shall make
Lovers mad for their sweet sake!”

II.

Once I said,
Seeing tresses, golden-brown,
In a bright shower falling down
Over neck and bosom white
As an angel's clad in light—
Odorous tresses drooping low
O'er a forehead pure as snow,—
“Some time, sweet, in thy soft hair
Love shall set a shining snare!”

III.

Once I said,
Seeing lips whose crimson hue
Mocked the roses wet with dew,—

Warm, sweet lips, whose breath was balm,—
Pure, proud lips, serenely calm,—
Tender lips, whose smiling grace
Lit with splendor all the face,—
“ Sweet, for kiss of thine some day
Men will barter souls away ! ”

IV.

Idly said !
God hath taken care of all
Joy or pain that might befall !
Lover's lip shall never thrill
At thy kisses, soft and still ;
Lover's heart shall never break
In sore anguish for thy sake ;
Lover's soul for thee shall know
Nor love's rapture, nor its woe ;—
All is said !

THE SPARROW TO THE SKYLARK

O SKYLARK, soaring, soaring,
Ere day is well begun,
Thy full, glad song outpouring
To greet the rising sun,—
So high, so high in heaven
Thy swift wing cleaves the blue,
We sparrows in the hedges
Can scarcely follow you !

O strong, unwearied singer !
By summer winds caressed,
Among the white clouds floating
With sunshine on thy breast,
We hear thy clear notes dropping
In showers of golden rain,
A glad, triumphant music
That hath no thought of pain !

We twitter in the hedges ;
We chirp our little songs,
Whose low, monotonous murmur
To homeliest life belongs ;
We perch in lowly places,
We hop from bough to bough,
While in the wide sky-spaces,
On strong wing soarest thou !

Yet we—we share the rapture
And glory of thy flight—
Thou'rt still a bird, O skylark,—
Thou spirit glad and bright !
And ah ! no sparrow knoweth
But its low note may be
Part of earth's joy and gladness
That finds full voice in thee !

THE BELL OF ST. PAUL'S

“The great bell of St. Paul's, which only sounds when the King is dead.”

TOLL, toll, thou solemn bell!
A royal head lies low,
And mourners through the palace halls
Slowly and sadly go.
Lift up thine awful voice,
Thou, silent for so long!
Say that a monarch's soul has passed
To join the shadowy throng.

Toll yet again, thou bell!
Mutely thine iron tongue,
Prisoned within yon lofty tower,
For many a year has hung.
But now its mournful peal
Startles a nation's ear,
And swells from listening shore to shore,
That the whole world may hear.

A whisper from the past
Blends with each solemn tone
That from those brazen lips of thine
Upon the air is thrown.
Never had trumpet's peal,
On clarion sounding shrill,
Such power as that deep undertone
The listener's heart to thrill.

Come, tell us tales, thou bell,
Of those of old renown,
Those sturdy warrior kings who fought
For sceptre and for crown.
Tell of the lion-hearts
Whose pulses moved the world ;
Whose banners flew so swift and far,
O'er land and sea unfurled !

From out the buried years,
From many a vaulted tomb,
Whence neither pomp nor power could chase
The dim, sepulchral gloom,
Lo, now, a pale, proud line,
They glide before our eyes ! —
Art thou a wizard, mighty bell,
To bid the dead arise ?

But toll, toll on, thou bell !
Toll for the royal dead ;
Toll—for the hand now sceptreless ;
Toll—for the crownless head ;
Toll—for the human heart
With all its loves and woes ;
Toll—for the soul that passes now
Unto its long repose !

DECEMBER 26, 1910

A BALLAD OF MAJOR ANDERSON

COME, children, leave your playing this dark and stormy
night,
Shut fast the rattling window-blinds, and make the fire burn
bright ;
And hear an old man's story, while loud the fierce winds
blow,
Of gallant Major Anderson and fifty years ago.

I was a young man then, boys, but twenty-nine years old,
And all my comrades knew me for a soldier brave and
bold ;
My eye was bright, my step was firm, I measured six feet
two,
And I knew not what it was to shirk when there was work to do.

We were stationed at Fort Moultrie, in Charleston harbor,
then,
A brave band, though a small one, of scarcely seventy men ;
And day and night we waited for the coming of the foe,
With noble Major Anderson, just fifty years ago.

Were they French or English, ask you ? Oh, neither, neither,
child !
We were at peace with other lands, and all the nations
smiled
On the stars and stripes, wherever they floated far and free,
And all the foes we had to meet we found this side the sea.

But even between brothers bitter feuds will sometimes rise,
And 'twas the cloud of civil war that darkened in the skies ;
I have not time to tell you how the quarrel first began,
Or how it grew, till o'er our land the strife like wildfire ran.

I will not use hard words, my boys, for I am old and gray,
And I've learned it is an easy thing for the best to go astray ;
Some wrong there was on either part, I do not doubt at
all ;

There are two sides to a quarrel—be it great or be it small !

You scarce believe me, children. Grief and doubt are in
your eyes,
Fixed steadily upon me in wonder and surprise ;
Don't forget to thank our Father, when to-night you kneel to
pray,
That an undivided people rule America to-day.

We were stationed at Fort Moultrie—but about a mile away,
The battlements of Sumter stood proudly in the bay ;
'Twas by far the best position, as he could not help but
know,
Our gallant Major Anderson, just fifty years ago.

Yes, 'twas just after Christmas, fifty years ago to-night ;
The sky was calm and cloudless, the moon was large and
bright ;
At six o'clock the drum beat to call us to parade,
And not a man suspected the plan that had been laid.

But the first thing a soldier learns is that he must obey,
And that when an order's given he has not a word to say ;
So when told to man the boats, not a question did we ask,
But silently, yet eagerly, began our hurried task.

We did a deal of work that night, though our numbers were
but few ;
We had all our stores to carry, and our ammunition too ;
And the guard-ship— 'twas the Nina—set to watch us in the
bay,
Never dreamed what we were doing, though 'twas almost
light as day.

We spiked the guns we left behind, and cut the flag-staff
down,—
From its top should float no colors if it might not hold our
own,—
Then we sailed away for Sumter as fast as we could go,
With our good Major Anderson, just fifty years ago.

I never can forget, my boys, how the next day, at noon,
The drums beat and the band played a stirring martial tune,
And silently we gathered round the flag-staff, strong and
high,
Forever pointing upward to God's temple in the sky.

Our noble Major Anderson was good as he was brave,
And he knew without His blessing no banner long could
wave ;
So he knelt, with head uncovered, while the chaplain read a
prayer,
And as the last amen was said, the flag rose high in air.

Then our loud huzzas rang out, far and widely o'er the sea !
We shouted for the stars and stripes, the standard of the
free !
Every eye was fixed upon it, every heart beat warm and
fast,
As with eager lips we promised to defend it to the last !

'Twas a sight to be remembered, boys—the chaplain with
his book,
Our leader humbly kneeling, with his calm, undaunted look ;
And the officers and men, crushing tears they would not
shed,—
And the blue sea all around us, and the blue sky overhead !

Now, go to bed, my children, the old man's story's told,—
Stir up the fire before you go, 'tis bitter, bitter cold ;
And I'll tell you more to-morrow night, when loud the fierce
winds blow,
Of gallant Major Anderson and fifty years ago.

FROM BATON ROUGE

FROM the fierce conflict and the deadly fray
A patriot hero comes to us this day.

Greet him with music and with loud acclaim,
And let our hills re-echo with his name.

Bring rarest flowers their rich perfume to shed,
Like sweetest incense, round the warrior's head.

Let heart and voice cry "welcome," and a shout,
Upon the summer air, ring gayly out,

To hail the hero, who from fierce affray
And deadly conflict comes to us this day.

Alas! alas! for smiles ye give but tears,
And wordless sorrow on each face appears.

And for glad music, jubilant and clear,
The tolling bell, the muffled drum, we hear.

Woe to *us*, soldier, loyal, tried, and brave,
That we have naught to give thee but a grave.

Woe that the wreath that should have decked thy brow,
Can but be laid upon thy coffin now.

Woe that thou canst not hear us when we say,—
"Hail to thee, brother, welcome home to-day!"

O God, we lift our waiting eyes to Thee,
And sadly cry, how long must these things be ?

How long must noble blood be poured like rain,
Flooding our land from mountain unto main ?

How long from desolated hearths must rise
The smoke of life's most costly sacrifice ?

Our brothers languish upon beds of pain,—
Father, O Father, have they bled in vain ?

Is it for naught that they have drunken up
The very dregs of this most bitter cup ?

How long ? how long ? O God ! our cause is just,
And in Thee only do we put our trust.

As Thou didst guide the Israelites of old
Through the Red Sea, and through the desert wold,

Lead Thou our leaders, and our land shall be
For evermore, the land where all are free !

.

Hail and farewell,—we whisper in one breath,
As thus we meet thee, hand in hand with death !

God give thy ashes undisturbed repose
Where drum-beat wakens neither friend nor foes ;

God take thy spirit to eternal rest,
And, for Christ's sake, enroll thee with the blest !

IN THE WILDERNESS

MAY 6, 1864

How beautiful was earth that day !
The far blue sky had not a cloud ;
The river rippled on its way,
Singing sweet songs aloud.

The delicate beauty of the spring
Pervaded all the murmuring air ;
It touched with grace the meanest thing
And made it very fair.

The blithe birds darted to and fro,
The bees were humming round the hive,
So happy in that radiant glow !
So glad to be alive !

And I ? My heart was calmly blest.
I knew afar the war-cloud rolled
Lurid and dark, in fierce unrest,
Laden with woes untold.

But on that day my fears were stilled ;
The very air I breathed was joy ;
The rest and peace my soul that filled
Had nothing of alloy.

I took the flower he loved the best,
The arbutus,—fairest child of May,—
And with its perfume half oppressed,
Twined many a lovely spray

About his picture on the wall ;
His eyes were on me all the while,
And when I had arranged them all
I thought he seemed to smile.

O Christ, be pitiful ! That hour
Saw him fall bleeding on the sod ;
And while I toyed with leaf and flower
His soul went up to God !

For him one pang—and then a crown ;
For him the laurels heroes wear ;
For him a name whose long renown
Ages shall onward bear.

For me the cross without the crown ;
For me the drear and lonely life ;
O God ! My sun, not his, went down
On that red field of strife.

CHARLEY OF MALVERN HILL

A WAR-WORN soldier, bronzed and seamed
By weary march and battle stroke ;
'Twas thus, while leaning on his crutch,
The wounded veteran spoke,—

“ The blue-eyed boy of Malvern Hill !
A hero every inch was he,
Though scarcely larger than the child
You hold, sir, on your knee.

“ Some mother's darling ! On that field
He seemed so strangely out of place,
With his pure brow, his shining hair,
His sweet, unconscious grace.

“ But not a bearded warrior there
Watched with a more undaunted eye
The blackness of the battle-cloud,
As the fierce storm rose high.

“ That morn—ah ! what a morn was that !—
We thought to send him to the rear ;
We loved the lad—and love, you know,
Is near akin to fear.

“ We knew that many a gallant soul
Must pass away in one long sigh,
Ere nightfall. On that bloody field,
'Twas not for boys to die.

“ But he—could you have seen him then,
As, with his blue eyes full of fire,
He poured forth tears and pleadings, half
Of shame and half of ire !

“ ‘ Oh ! do not bid me go ! ’ he cried ;
‘ I love yon flag as well as you !
I did not join your ranks to run
When there is work to do !

“ ‘ I did not come to beat my drum
Only upon some gala day.’
The colonel shook his head, but said,
‘ Well, Charley, you may stay.’

“ Ah ! then his tears were quickly dried,
A few glad words he strove to say ;
But there was little time to talk,
And hardly time to pray.

“ For bitter, bitter was the strife
That raged that day on Malvern Hill ;
Blue coats and gray in great heaps lay,
Ere that wild storm grew still.

“ At length we charged. My very heart
Sank down within me, cold and dumb,
When to the front, and far ahead,
Rushed Charley with his drum !

“ Above the cannon’s thundering boom,
The din and shriek of shot and shell,
We heard its clear peal rolling out
Right gallantly and well.

“ A moment’s awful waiting ! Then
There came a sullen, angry roar,—

O God! An empty void remained
Where Charley stood before.

“What did we then? With souls on fire
We swept upon the advancing foe,
And bade good angels guard the dust
O'er which no tears might flow!”

SUPPLICAMUS

1864

O LAGGARD Sun ! make haste to wake
From her long trance the slumbering earth ;
Make haste this icy spell to break,
That she may give new glories birth !

O April rain ! so soft, so warm,
Bounteous in blessing, rich in gifts,
Drop tenderly upon her form,
And bathe the forehead she uplifts.

O springing grass ! make haste to run
With swift feet o'er the meadows bare ;
O'er hill and dale, through forest dun,
And where the wandering brooklets are !

O sweet wild flowers ! the darksome mould
Hasten with subtle strength to rift ;
Serene in beauty, meek yet bold,
Your fair brows to the sunlight lift !

O haste ye all ! for far away
In lonely beds our heroes sleep,
O'er which no wife may ever pray,
Nor child nor mother ever weep.

No quaintly carved memorial stone
May tell us that their ashes lie

Where southern pines make solemn moan,
And wailing winds give sad reply.

But deep in dreary, lonesome shades,
On many a barren, sandy plain,
By rock pass, in tangled glades,
And by the rolling, restless main ;

By rushing stream, by silent lake,
Uncoffined in their lowly graves,
Until the earth's last morn shall break,
Must sleep our unforgotten braves !

O sun ! O rain ! O gentle dew !
O fresh young grass, and opening flowers !
With yearning hearts we leave to you
The holy task that should be ours !

Light up the darkling forest's gloom ;
Cover the bare, unsightly clay
With tenderest verdure, with the bloom,
The beauty and perfume of May !

O sweet blue violets ! softly creep
Beside the slumbering warrior's bed ;
O roses ! let your red hearts leap
For joy your rarest sweets to shed ;

O humble mosses ! such as make
New England's woods and pastures fair,
Over each mound, for Love's sweet sake,
Spread your soft folds with tender care.

Dear Nature, to your loving breast
Clasp our dead heroes ! In your arms
Sweet be their sleep, serene their rest,
Unmoved by Battle's loud alarms !

THE LAST OF SIX

COME in ; you are welcome, neighbor ; all day I've been
alone,
And heard the wailing, wintry wind sweep by with bitter
moan ;
And to-night beside my lonely fire, I mutely wonder why
I, who once wept as others weep, sit here with tearless eye.

To-day this letter came to me. At first I could not brook
Upon the unfamiliar lines by strangers penned, to look ;
The dread of evil tidings shook my soul with wild alarm—
But Harry's in the hospital, and has only lost an arm.

He is the last—the last of six brave boys as e'er were
seen !
How short, to memory's vision, seem the years that lie be-
tween
This hour and those most blessed ones, when round this
hearth's bright blaze
They charmed their mother's heart and eye with all their
pretty ways !

My William was the eldest son, and he was first to go.
It did not at all surprise me, for I knew it would be so,
From that fearful April Sunday when the news from Sumter
came,
And his lips grew white as ashes, while his eyes were all
aflame.

He sprang to join the three months' men. I could not say
him nay,
Though my heart stood still within me when I saw him
march away ;
At the corner of the street he smiled, and waved the flag he
bore ;
I never saw him smile again—he was slain at Baltimore.

They sent his body back to me, and as we stood around
His grave, beside his father's, in yonder burial-ground,
John laid his hand upon my arm and whispered, " Mother
dear,
I have Willy's work and mine to do. I cannot loiter here."

I turned and looked at Paul, for he and John were twins, you
know,
Born on a happy Christmas, four-and-twenty years ago ;
I looked upon them both, while my tears fell down like
rain,
For I knew what one had spoken, had been spoken by the
twain.

In a month or more they left me—the merry, handsome
boys,
Who had kept the old house ringing with their laughter, fun,
and noise.
Then James came home to mind the farm ; my younger
sons were still
Mere children, at their lessons in the school-house on the
hill.

O days of weary waiting ! O days of doubt and dread !
I feared to read the papers, or to see the lists of dead ;

But when full many a battle-storm had left them both un-
harm'd,
I taught my foolish heart to think the double lives were
charm'd.

Their colonel since has told me that no braver boys than
they
Ever rallied round the colors, in the thickest of the fray ;
Upon the wall behind you their swords are hanging still—
For John was killed at Fair Oaks, and Paul at Malvern
Hill.

Then came the dark days, darker than any known before ;
There was another call for men—"three hundred thousand
more ;"
I saw the cloud on Jamie's brow grow deeper day by day ;
I shrank before the impending blow, and scarce had strength
to pray.

And yet at last I bade him go, while on my cheek and
brow
His loving tears and kisses fell ; I feel them even now,
Though the eyes that shed the tears, and the lips so warm
on mine
Are hidden under southern sands, beneath a blasted pine !

He did not die in battle-smoke, but for a weary year
He languished in close prison walls, a prey to hope and
fear ;
I dare not trust myself to think of the fruitless pangs he
bore,
My brain grows wild when in my dreams I count his suffer-
ings o'er.

Only two left ! I thought the worst was surely over then ;
But lo ! at once my school-boy sons sprang up before me—
men !

They heard their brothers' martyr blood call from the hal-
lowed ground ;
A loud, imperious summons that all other voices drowned.

I did not say a single word. My very heart seemed dead.
What could I do but take the cup, and bow my weary
head
To drink the bitter draught again ? I dared not hold them
back ;
I would as soon have tried to check the whirlwind on its
track.

You know the rest. At Cedar Creek my Frederick bravely
fell ;
They say his young arm did its work right nobly and right
well ;
His comrades breathe the hero's name with mingled love
and pride ;
I miss the gentle blue-eyed boy, who frolicked at my side.

For me, I ne'er shall weep again. I think my heart is
dead ;
I, who could weep for lighter griefs, have now no tears to
shed.
But read this letter, neighbor. There is nothing to alarm,
For Harry's in the hospital, and has only lost an arm !

THE DRUMMER BOY'S BURIAL

ALL day long the storm of battle through the startled valley
swept ;

All night long the stars in heaven o'er the slain sad vigils
kept.

Oh, the ghastly, upturned faces, gleaming whitely through
the night !

Oh, the heaps of mangled corpses in that dim, sepulchral
light !

One by one the pale stars faded, and at length the morning
broke ;

But not one of all the sleepers on that field of death awoke.

Slowly passed the golden hours of the long bright summer
day,

And upon the field of carnage still the dead unburied lay ;

Lay there stark and cold, but pleading with a dumb, un-
ceasing prayer,

For a little dust to hide them from the staring sun and air.

Once again the night dropped round them—night so holy
and so calm

That the moonbeams hushed the spirit, like the sound of
prayer or psalm.

On a couch of trampled grasses, just apart from all the rest,
Lay a fair young boy, with small hands meekly folded on his
breast.

Death had touched him very gently, and he lay as if in
sleep ;

Even his mother scarce had shuddered at that slumber,
calm and deep.

For a smile of wondrous sweetness lent a radiance to the
face,

And the hand of cunning sculptor could have added naught
of grace

To the marble limbs so perfect in their passionless repose,
Robbed of all save matchless purity by hard, unpitying foes.

And the broken drum beside him all his life's short story
told ;

How he did his duty bravely till the death-tide o'er him
rolled.

Midnight came with ebon garments and a diadem of stars,
While right upward in the zenith hung the fiery planet Mars.

Hark ! a sound of stealthy footsteps and of voices whispering
low—

Was it nothing but the young leaves, or the brooklet's mur-
muring flow ?

Clinging closely to each other, striving never to look round
As they passed with silent shudder the pale corpses on the
ground,

Came two little maidens—sisters—with a light and hasty
tread,

And a look upon their faces, half of sorrow, half of dread.

And they did not pause nor falter till, with throbbing hearts,
they stood

Where the Drummer-Boy was lying in that partial solitude.

They had brought some simple garments from their wardrobe's scanty store,
And two heavy iron shovels in their slender hands they bore.

Then they quickly knelt beside him, crushing back the pitying tears,
For they had no time for weeping, nor for any girlish fears.

And they robed the icy body, while no glow of maiden shame
Changed the pallor of their foreheads to a flush of lambent flame.

For their saintly hearts yearned o'er it in that hour of sorest need,
And they felt that Death was holy and it sanctified the deed.

But they smiled and kissed each other when their new, strange task was o'er,
And the form that lay before them its unwonted garments wore.

Then with slow and weary labor a small grave they hollowed out,
And they lined it with the withered grass and leaves that lay about.

But the day was slowly breaking ere their holy work was done,
And in crimson pomp the morning again heralded the sun.

And then those little maidens—they were children of our foes—
Laid the body of our Drummer-Boy to undisturbed repose.

1865

O DARKEST Year ! O brightest Year !
O changeful Year of joy and woe,
To-day we stand beside thy bier,
Still loth to let thee go !

We look upon thy brow, and say,
“ How old he is,—how old and worn ! ”
Has but a twelvemonth passed away
Since thou wert newly born ?

So long it seems since on the air
The joy-bells rang to hail thy birth—
And pale lips strove to call thee fair,
And sing the songs of mirth !

For dark the heavens that o'er thee hung ;
By stormy winds thy couch was rocked ;
Thy cradle-hymn the Furies sung,
While sneering Demons mocked !

We held our very breath for dread ;
Shadowed by clouds, that, like a pall,
Darkened the blue sky overhead,
And night hung over all.

But thou wert better than our fears,
And bade our land's long anguish cease ;
And gave us, O thou Year of years,
The costly pearl of Peace !

So dearly bought ! By precious blood
Of patriot heroes—sire and son—
And that of him, the pure and good,
Our wearied, martyred One ;

Who bore for us the heavy load—
The cross our hands upon him laid ;
Who trod for us the toilsome road
Meekly, yet undismayed !

And for that gift—although thy graves
Lie thick beneath December's snow,
Though every hamlet mourns its braves,
And bears its weight of woe—

We bless thee ! Yet, O bounteous year,
For more than Peace we thank thee now,
As bending o'er thine honored bier,
We crown thy pallid brow !

We bless thee, though we scarcely dare
Give to our new-born joy a tongue ;
O mighty Year, upon the air
Thy voice triumphant rung,

Even in death ! and at the sound,
From myriad limbs the fetters fell
Into the dim and vast profound,
While tolled thy passing bell !

Farewell, farewell, thou storied Year !
Thou wondrous Year of joy and gloom !
With grateful hearts we crown thee, ere
We lay thee in thy tomb !

OUR 'FLAGS AT THE CAPITOL

REMOVE them not ! Above our fallen braves
Nature not yet her perfect work hath wrought ;
Scarce has the turf grown green upon their graves,
The martyr graves for whose embrace they fought.

The wounds of our long conflict are not healed ;
Our land's fair face is seamed with many a scar ;
And woeful sights, on many a battle-field,
Show ghastly grim beneath the evening star.

Still does the sad Earth tremble with affright,
Lest she the tread of armèd hosts should feel
Once more upon her bosom. Still the Night
Hears, in wild dreams, the cannon's thundering peal.

Still do the black-robed mothers come and go ;
Still do lone wives by dreary hearthstones weep ;
Still does a Nation, in her pride and woe,
For her dead sons a mournful vigil keep.

Ah, then, awhile delay ! Remove ye not
These drooping banners from their place on high ;
They make of each proud hall a hallowed spot,
Where Truth must dwell and Freedom cannot die.

Now slowly waving in this tranquil air,
What wondrous eloquence is in their speech !
No prophet " silver tongued," no poet rare,
Even in dreams may hope such heights to reach.

They tell of Life that calmly looked on Death—
Of peerless valor and of trust sublime—
Of costly sacrifice, of holiest faith,
Of lofty hopes that ended not with Time.

Oh ! each worn fold is hallowed ! set apart
To minister unto us in our needs—
To bear henceforth to many a fainting heart,
The cordial wine of noble thoughts and deeds.

Then leave them yet awhile where, day by day,
The lessons that they teach, your souls may learn ;
So shall ye work for righteousness alway,
And for its faithful service ever yearn.

Now may God bless our land for evermore !
And from all strife and turmoil grant surcease ;
While from the mountains to the farthest shore
Accordant voices softly whisper—Peace !

MY MOCKING-BIRD

MOCKING-BIRD ! mocking-bird ! swinging high
Aloft in your gilded cage,
The clouds are hurrying over the sky,
The wild winds fiercely rage.
But soft and warm is the air you breathe
Up there with the tremulous ivy wreath,
And never an icy blast can chill
The perfumed silence sweet and still.

Mocking-bird ! mocking-bird ! from your throat
Breaks forth no flood of song,
Nor even one perfect golden note,
Triumphant, glad, and strong !
But now and then a pitiful wail,
Like the plaintive sigh of the dying gale,
Comes from that arching breast of thine
Swinging up there with the ivy-vine.

Mocking-bird ! mocking-bird ! well I know
Your heart is far away,
Where the golden stars of the jasmine glow,
And the roses bloom away !
For your cradle-nest was softly made
In the depth of a blossoming myrtle's shade ;
And you heard the chant of the southern seas
Borne inland by the favoring breeze.

But, ah, my beautiful mocking-bird !
Should I bear you back again,
Never would song of yours be heard
Echoing through the glen.
For once, ah ! once at the dawn of day,
You waked to the roar of the deadly fray,
When the terrible clash of armed foes
Startled the vale from its dim repose.

At first you sat on a swaying bough,
Mocking the bugle's blare,
Fearless and free in the fervid glow
Of the heated, sulphurous air.
Your voice rang out like a trumpet's note,
With a martial ring in its upward float,
And stern men smiled, for you seemed to be
Cheering them on to victory !

But at length, as the awful day wore on,
You flew to a tree-top high,
And sat like a spectre grim and wan,
Outlined against the sky ;
Sat silently watching the fiery fray
Till, heaps upon heaps, the Blue and Gray
Lay together, a silent band,
Whose souls had passed to the shadowy land.

Ah, my mocking-bird ! swinging there
Under the ivy-vine,
You still remember the bugle's blare,
And the blood poured forth like wine.
The soul of song in your gentle breast
Died in that hour of fierce unrest,
When like a spectre grim and wan,
You watched to see how the strife went on.

COMING HOME

WHEN the winter winds were loud,
And Earth wore a snowy shroud,
Oft our darling wrote to us,
And the words ran ever thus—
“ I am coming in the spring !
With the mayflower’s blossoming,
With the young leaves on the tree,
O my dear ones, look for me ! ”.

And she came. One dreary day,
When the skies were dull and gray,
Softly through the open door
Our belovèd came once more.
Came with folded hands that lay
Very quietly away—
Came with heavy-lidded eyes,
Lifted not in glad surprise.

Not a single word she spoke ;
Laugh nor sigh her silence broke
As across the quiet room,
Darkening in the twilight gloom,
On she passed in stillest guise,
Calm as saint in Paradise,
To the spot where—woe betide !—
Four years since she stood a bride.

Then, you think, we sprang to greet her—
Sprang with outstretched hands, to meet her ;
Clasped her in our arms once more,
As in happy days of yore ;
Poured warm kisses on her cheek,
Passive lips and forehead meek,
Till the barrier melted down
That had thus between us grown.

Ah no !—Darling, did you know
When we bent above you so ?
When our tears fell down like rain,
And our hearts were wild with pain ?
Did you pity us that day,
Even as holy angels may
Pity mortals here below,
While they wonder at their woe ?

Who can tell us ? Word nor sign
Came from those pale lips of thine ;
Loving hearts and yearning breast
Lay in coldest, calmest rest.
Is thy Heaven so very fair
That thou dost forget us there ?
Speak, belovèd ! Woe is me
That in vain I call on thee !

WAKENING EARLY

IN loving jest you wrote—" Ah, me !
My babe's blue eyes are fair to see ;
And sweet his cooing love-notes be
That waken me too early ! "

Oh ! would to God, beloved, to-day
That merry shout or gleeful play
Might drive your heavy sleep away,
And bid you waken early.

But vain are all our prayers and cries ;
From your low bed you will not rise ;
No kisses falling on your eyes,
Can waken you right early.

Bright are the skies above your bed,
And through the elm-boughs overhead
Are golden sunbeams softly shed,
That wake you late nor early.

Beside you through these summer days
The murmuring fountain, as it plays,
Fills the soft air with diamond sprays,
But does not wake you early !

We bring the flowers you loved so well,
The pure white rose and lily bell ;
Their sweets break not this fearful spell ;
They do not wake you early !

We sing your songs ; we pause to hear
Your bird-like voice rise full and clear ;
Ah ! dull and heavy is your ear ;
 We cannot wake you early.

You will not wake ? Then may your sleep,
If it be long, be calm and deep ;
Thank God, the eyes forget to weep
 That do not waken early !

BLEST

Dec. 1865

SINKING to thine eternal rest,
O dying Year ! I call thee blest ;
Blest as no coming year may be
This side of vast Eternity !

Thy cheek is pale, thy brow is worn ;
Thine arms are weary, that have borne
The heaviest burdens ever laid
On any, since the world was made.

But thou didst know her whom to-day
My fond heart mourns, and must alway ;
She loved thee, claimed thee, called thee dear,
Hailing with joy the glad New Year !

Thou didst behold her, fair and good,
The perfect flower of womanhood ;
Simple and pure in thought and deed,
Yet strong in every hour of need.

Ah ! other years shall come and go,
Bidding the sweet June roses blow ;
But never on their yearning eyes
Shall her fair presence once arise !

The Spring shall miss her, and the long,
Bright Summer days hear not her song ;

And hoary Winter, draped in snow,
Finding her not, shall haste to go !

Therefore, Old Year, I call thee blest,
Thus sinking to eternal rest ;
Blest as no other Year may be
This side of vast Eternity !

HELEN

DEAR Helen, if thine earnest eyes,
So deeply blue, so darkly bright,
Look downward from the azure skies
That hide thee from my yearning sight :

Think not, because my days go on
Just as they did when thou wert here,
Sometimes in shade, sometimes in sun,
From month to month, from year to year,

That I forget thee ! Fresh and green
Over each grave the grass must grow
In God's good time, and, all unseen,
The violets take deep root below.

But yet the grave itself remains
Beneath the verdure and the bloom ;
And all kind Nature's loving pains
Can but conceal the enduring tomb.

I work, I read, I sing, I smile,
I train my vines and tend my flowers ;
But under thoughts of thee, the while,
Haunt me through all the passing hours.

And still my heart cries out for thee,
As it must cry till life is past,
And in some land beyond the sea
I meet thy clasping hand at last !

“PRO PATRIA”

THE DEAD CENTURY

I.

Lo ! we come
Bearing the Century, cold and dumb !
Folded above the mighty breast
Lie the hands that have earned their rest ;
Hushed are the grandly speaking lips ;
Closed are the eyes in drear eclipse ;
And the sculptured limbs are deathly still,
Responding not to the eager will,
As we come
Bearing the Century, cold and dumb !

II.

Lo ! we wait
Knocking here at the sepulchre's gate !
Souls of the ages passed away,
A mightier joins your ranks to-day ;
Open your doors and give him room,
Buried Centuries, in your tomb !
For calmly under this heavy pall
Sleepeth the kingliest of ye all,
While we wait
At the sepulchre's awful gate !

III.

Yet—pause here,
Bending low o'er the narrow bier!
Pause ye awhile and let your thought
Compass the work that he hath wrought;
Look on his brow so scarred and worn;
Think of the weight his hands have borne;
Think of the fetters he hath broken,
Of the mighty words *his* lips have spoken
Who lies here
Dead and cold on a narrow bier!

IV.

Ere he goes
Silent and calm to his grand repose—
While the Centuries in their tomb
Crowd together to give him room,
Let us think of the wondrous deeds'
Answering still to the world's great needs,
Answering still to the world's wild prayer,
He hath been first to do and dare!

Ah! he goes
Crowned with bays to his last repose.

V.

When the earth
Sang for joy to hail his birth,
Over the hill-tops, faint and far,
Glimmered the light of Freedom's star.
Only a poor, pale torch it seemed—
Dimly from out the clouds it gleamed—

Oft to the watcher's eye 'twas lost
Like a flame by fierce winds rudely tossed.
Scarce could Earth
Catch one ray when she hailed his birth !

VI.

But ere long
His young voice, like a clarion strong,
Rang through the wilderness far and free,
Prophet and herald of good to be !
Then with a shout the stalwart men
Answered proudly from mount and glen,
Till in the brave, new, western world
Freedom's banners were wide unfurled !
And ere long
The Century's voice, like a clarion strong,

VII.

Cried, " O Earth,
Pæans sing for a Nation's birth !
Shout hosannas, ye golden stars,
Peering through yonder cloudy bars !
Burn, O Sun, with a clearer beam !
Shine, O Moon, with a softer gleam !
Join, ye winds, in the choral strain !
Swell, rolling seas, the glad refrain,
While the Earth
Pæans sings for a Nation's birth ! "

VIII.

Ah ! he saw—
This young prophet, with solemn awe—

How, after weary pain and sin,
Strivings without and foes within,
Fruitless prayings and long suspense,
And toil that bore no recompense—
After peril and blood and tears,
Honor and Peace should crown the years !
 This he saw
While his heart thrilled with solemn awe.

IX.

His clear eyes,
Gazing forward in glad surprise,
Saw how our land at last should be
Truly the home of the brave and free !
Saw from the old world's crowded streets,
Pestilent cities, and close retreats,
Forms gaunt and pallid with famine sore
Flee in hot haste to our happy shore,
 Their sad eyes
Widening ever in new surprise.

X.

From all lands
Thronging they come in eager bands ;
Each with the tongue his mother spoke ;
Each with the songs her voice awoke ;
Each with his dominant hopes and needs,
Alien habits and varying creeds.
Bringing strange fictions and fancies they came,
Calling old truths by a different name,
 When the lands
Sent their sons hither in thronging bands.

XI.

But the Seer—
 This dead Century lying here—
 Rising out of this chaos, saw
 Peace and Order and Love and Law !
 Saw by what subtle alchemy
 Basest of metals at length should be
 Transmuted into the shining gold,
 Meet for a king to have and hold.

Ah ! great Seer !
 This pale Century lying here !

XII.

So he taught
 Honest freedom of speech and thought ;
 Taught that Truth is the grandest thing
 Painter can paint, or poet sing ;
 Taught that under the meanest guise
 It marches to deeds of high éprise ;
 Treading the paths the prophets trod
 Up to the very mount of God !
 Truth, he taught,
 Claims full freedom of speech and thought.

XIII.

Bearing long
 Heavy burdens of hate and wrong,
 Still has the arm of the Century been
 Waging war against crime and sin.
 Still has he plead humanity's cause ;
 Still has he prayed for equal laws ;

Still has he taught that the human race
 Is one in despite of hue or place,
 Even though long
 It has wrestled with hate and wrong.

XIV.

And at length—
 A giant arising in his strength—
 The fetters of serf and slave he broke,
 Smiting them off by a single stroke !
 Over the Muscovite's waste of snows,
 Up from the fields where the cotton grows,
 Clearly the shout of deliverance rang,
 When chattel and serf to manhood sprang,
 As at length
 The giant rose up in resistless strength.

.

XV.

Far apart—
 Each alone like a lonely heart—
 Sat the Nations, until his hand
 Wove about them a wondrous band ;
 Wrought about them a mighty chain
 Binding the mountains to the main !
 Distance and time rose dark between
 Islands and continents still unseen,
 While apart
 None felt the throb of another's heart.

XVI.

But to-day
 Time and space hath he swept away !

Side by side do the Nations sit
 By ties of brotherhood closer knit ;
 Whispers float o'er the rolling deep ;
 Voices echo from steep to steep ;
 Nations speak, and the quick replies
 Fill the earth and the vaulted skies ;
 For to-day
 Time and distance are swept away.

XVII.

 If strange thrills
 Quicken Rome on her seven hills ;
 If afar on her sultry throne
 India wails and makes her moan ;
 If the eagles of haughty France
 Fall as the Prussian hosts advance,
 All the continents, all the lands,
 Feel the shock through their claspèd hands.
 And quick thrills
 Stir the remotest vales and hills.

.

XVIII.

 Yet these eyes,
 Dark on whose lids Death's shadow lies,
 Let their far-reaching vision rest
 Not alone on the mountain's crest ;
 Nor did these feet with stately tread
 Follow alone where the Nations led ;
 Nor these pale hands, so weary-worn,
 Minister but where States were born !—
 These clear eyes,
 Soft on whose lips Death's slumber lies,

XIX.

Turned their gaze,
Earnest and pitiful, on the ways
Where the poor, burdened sons of toil
Earned their bread amid dust and moil.
Saw the dim attics where, day by day,
Women were stitching their lives away,
Bending low o'er the slender steel
Till heart and brain began to reel,
And their days
Stretched on and on in a dreary maze.

XX.

Then he spoke ;
Lo ! at once into being woke
Muscles of iron, arms of steel,
Nerves that never a thrill could feel !
Wheels and pulleys and whirling bands
Did the work of the weary hands,
And tireless feet moved to and fro
Where the aching limbs were wont to go,
When he spoke
And all his sprites into being woke.

XXI.

Do you say
He was no saint who has passed away ?
Saint or sinner, he did brave deeds
Answering still to humanity's needs !
Songs he hath sung that shall live for aye ;
Words he hath uttered that ne'er shall die ;

Richer the world than when the earth
Sang for joy to hail his birth,
Even though you say
He was no saint whom we sing to-day.

XXII.

Lo ! we wait
Knocking here at the sepulchre's gate !
Souls of the Ages passed away,
A mightier joins your ranks to-day ;
Open your doors, ye royal dead,
And welcome give to this crownèd head !
For calmly under this sable pall
Sleepeth the kingliest of ye all,
While we wait
At the sepulchre's awful gate !

XXIII.

Give him room
Proudly, Centuries ! in your tomb.
Now that his weary work is done,
Honor and rest he well hath won.
Let him who is first among you pay
Homage to him who comes this day,
Bidding him pass to his destined place,
Noblest of all his noble race !
Make ye room
For the kingly dead in the silent tomb !

THE RIVER OTTER

A FRAGMENT

A HUNDRED times the Summer's fragrant blooms
Have laden all the air with sweet perfumes ;
A hundred times, along the mountain-side,
Autumn has flung his crimson banners wide ;
A hundred times has kindly Winter spread
His snowy mantle o'er the violet's bed ;
A hundred times has Earth rejoiced to hear
The Spring's light footsteps in the forest sere,
Since on yon grassy knoll the quick, sharp stroke
Of the young woodman's axe the silence broke.
Not then did these encircling hills look down
On quaint old farmhouse, or on steepled town.
No church-spires pointed to the arching skies ;
No wandering lovers saw the moon arise ;
No childish laughter mingled with the song
Of the fair Otter, as it flowed along
As brightly then as now. Ah ! little recked
The joyous river, when the sunshine flecked
Its dancing waters, that no human eye
Gave it glad welcome as it frolicked by !
The long, uncounted years had come and flown,
And it had still swept on, unseen, unknown,
Biding its time. No minstrel sang its praise,
No poet named it in immortal lays.
It played no part in legendary lore,
And young Romance knew not its winding shore.

But in her own loveliness Nature is glad,
And little she cares for man's smile or his frown ;
In the robes of her royalty still she is clad,
Though his eye may behold not her sceptre or crown !
And over our beautiful Otter the trees
Swayed lightly as now in the frolicsome breeze ;
And the tremulous violet lifted an eye
As blue as its own to the laughing blue sky.

The harebell trembled on its stem
Down where the rushing waters gleam,
A sapphire on the broidered hem
Of some fair Naiad of the stream.
The buttercups, bright-eyed and bold,
Held up their chalices of gold
To catch the sunshine and the dew,
Gayly as those that bloom for you.
And deep within the forest shade,
Where broadest noon mere twilight made,
Ten thousand small, sweet censers swung,
And tiny bells by zephyrs rung,
Made tinkling music till the day
In solemn splendor died away.
The woods were full of praise and prayer,
Although no human tongue was there ;
For every pine and hemlock sung
The grand cathedral aisles among,
And every flower that gemmed the sod
Looked up and whispered, " Thou art God."
The birds sung as they sing to-day,
A song of love and joy alway.
The brown thrush from its golden throat
Poured out its long, melodious note ;
The pigeons cooed ; the veery threw
Its mellow thrill from spray to spray ;
The wild night-hawk its trumpet blew,

And the owl cried, "Tu whit, tu whoo,"
From set of sun to break of day.
The partridge reared her fearless brood
Safe in the darkling solitude,
And the bald eagle built its nest
High on the tall cliff's craggy crest.
And often, when the still moonlight
Made all the lonely valley bright,
Down from the hills its thirst to slake,
The deer trod softly through the brake ;
While far away the spotted fawn
Waited the coming of the dawn,
And trembled when the panther's scream
Startled it from a troubled dream.
The black bear roamed the forest wide ;
The fierce wolf tracked the mountain-side ;
The wild-cat's silent, stealthy tread
Was, even there, a fear and dread ;
The red fox barked—a strange, weird sound,
That woke the slumbering echoes round ;
And the burrowing mink and otter hid
In their holes the tangled roots amid.
Lords of their limitless domain,
Of hill and dale, of mount and plain,
The wild things dreamed not of the hour
When they should own their Master's power !

PAST AND PRESENT

(DRIFTWOOD)

. . . Grand, heroic, true,
Faithful and brave thine earnest work to do,
O glorious present ! we rejoice in thee,
Thou noble nurse of great deeds yet to be !
Hast thou not shown us that our mother Earth
Still, in exultant joy, gives heroes birth ?
Do not the old romances that our youth,
Revered and honored as the truest truth,
Grow pale and dim before the facts sublime
Thy pen has written on the scroll of Time ?

Ah ! never yet did poet's tongue,
Though like a silver bell it rung ;
Or minstrel, o'er his sounding lyre
Breathing the old, prophetic fire ;
Or harper, in the storied walls
Of Scotia's proud, baronial halls—
Where mail-clad men with sword and spear
Waited entranced the song to hear,
That through the stormy midnight hour
Fast held them in its spell of power—
Ah ! never yet did they rehearse,
In flowing rhyme or stately verse,
The praise of deeds more nobly done,
Or tell of fields more grandly won !

We laud thee, we praise thee, we bless thee to-day !
At thy feet, lowly bending, glad homage we pay !

Thou hast taught us that men are as brave as of yore ;
That the day of great deeds and great thought is not o'er ;
That the courage undaunted, the far-reaching faith,
The strength that unshaken looks calmly on death,
The self-abnegation that hastens to lay
Its all on the altar, have not passed away.
Thou hast taught us that " country " is more than a name ;
That honor unsullied is better than fame ;
Thou hast proved that while man can still battle for truth,
Even boyhood can give up the promise of youth,
And, yielding its life with a smile and a sigh,
Say, "'Tis sweet for my God and my country to die."
O heart-searching Present, thy sons have gone down
To the night of the grave in their day of renown !
Thy daughters have watched by the hearthstone in vain
For the loved and the lost that returned not again.
No Spartans were they—yet with tears falling fast,
Their faith and their patience endured to the last ;
And God gave them strength to their dearest to say,
" Go ye forth to the fight, while we labor and pray ! "
Thou hast opened thy coffers on land and on sea,
And broad-handed Charity, noble and free,
Has lavished thy bounties on friend and on foe,
Like the rain that, descending, falls softly and slow
On the just and the unjust, and never may know
The one from the other. When thy story is told
By some age that looks backward and calls thee " the old,"
It shall puzzle its sages, all great as thou art,
To tell which was greatest, thy head or thy heart !
Mighty words thy lips have spoken—
Strongest fetters thou hast broken—
And in tones like those of thunder,
When the clouds are rent asunder,
Thou hast made the Nations hear thee—
Thou hast bade the Tyrants fear thee—

And our hearts to-day proclaim thee,
As they oft have done before,
Fit to lead the glorious legions
Of the glorious days of yore !
Yet still, we pray thee, veil awhile
Thy splendor from our dazzled eyes
And hide the glory of thy smile,
Lest our souls wake to new surprise !
Bear with us while our feet to-day
Retrace a dim and shadowy way,
In search of what, it well may be,
Shall help to make us worthier thee !

.

And now, O, spirit of the Past, draw near,
And let us feel thy blessed presence here !
With reverent hearts and voices hushed and low,
We wait to hear thy garments' rustling flow !
From all the conflicts of our busy life,
From all its bitter and enduring strife,
Its eager yearnings and its wild turmoil,
Its cares, its joys, its sorrows and its toil,
Its aspirations, that too often seem
Like the remembered phantoms of a dream,
We turn aside. This hour is thine alone,
And none shall share the grandeur of thy throne.
Ah ! thou art here ! Beneath these whispering trees
Thy breath floats softly on the passing breeze ;
We feel the presence that we cannot see,
And every moment draws us nearer thee.
Could we but see thee with thy solemn eyes,
In whose rare depths such wondrous meaning lies—
Thy dark robes sweeping this enchanted ground—
Thy midnight hair with purple pansies crowned—

Thy lip so sadly sweet, thy brow serene !
 There is no expectation in thy mien,
 For thou hast done with dreams. Nor joy nor pain
 Can e'er disturb thy placid calm again.
 What is this veil that hides thee from our sight ?
 Breathe it away, thou spirit darkly bright !

It may not be ! Our eyes are dim,
 Perhaps with age, perhaps with tears ;
 We hear no more the choral hymn
 The angels sing among the spheres.
 Weary and worn and tempest-tossed,
 Much have we gained—and something lost—
 Since in the sunbeams golden glow,
 The rippling river's silvery flow,
 The song of bird or murmuring bee,
 The fragrant flower, the stately tree,
 The royal pomp of sunset skies,
 And all earth's varied harmonies,
 We saw and heard what nevermore
 Can Earth or Heaven to us restore,
 And felt a child's unquestioning faith
 In childhood's mystic lore !

.

Yet could our voices reach the slumbering dead
 Who rest so calmly in yon grass-grown bed,
 This truth would seem with greatest wonder fraught—
That they are heroes to our eyes and thought.
 For they were men who never dreamed of fame :
 They did not toil to make themselves a name ;
 They little fancied that when years had passed,
 And the long century had died at last,
 Another age should make their graves a shrine,
 And humble chaplets for their memory twine. .

They simply strove, as other men may strive,
Full, earnest lives in sober strength to live ;
They did the duty nearest to their hand ;
Subdued wild nature as at God's command ;
Laid the broad acres open to the sun,
And made fair homes in forests dark and dun ;
Built churches, founded schools, established laws,
Kindly and just and true to freedom's cause ;
Resisted wrong, and with stout hands and hearts,
In war, as well as peace, played well their parts.
Their men were brave ; their women pure and true ;
Their sons ashamed no honest work to do ;
And while they dreamed no dreams of being great,
They did great deeds, and conquered hostile Fate.

We laud them, we praise them, we bless them to-day ;
At their graves, as their right, tearful homage we pay !
And the laurel-crowned Present comes humbly at last,
And bends by our side at the shrine of the Past.
With the hands that such burdens unshrinking have borne,
From the brow weary cares have so furrowed and worn,
She takes off the chaplet, and lays it with tears,
That she cares not to hide, at the feet of the Years.
Hark ! a breath of faint music, a murmur of song !
A form of strange beauty is floating along
On the soft summer air, and the Future draws near,
With a light on her young face, unshadowed and clear.
Two garlands she bears in the arms that not yet
Have toiled 'neath the burden and heat of the day ;
Lo ! both are of amaranth, fragrant and wet
With the dew of remembrance, and fadeless away.
Oh ! well may we hush our vain babblings—and wait !
He who merits the crown, wears it sooner or late !
On the brow of the Present, the grave of the Past,
The wreaths they have earned shall rest surely at last !

VERMONT

(WRITTEN FOR THE VERMONT CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, AT BENNINGTON, AUGUST 15, 1877.)

I.

O WOMAN-FORM, majestic, strong and fair,
Sitting enthronèd where in upper air
Thy mountain-peaks in solemn grandeur rise,
Piercing the splendor of the summer skies—
Vermont! Our mighty mother, crowned to-day
In all the glory of thy hundred years,
If thou dost bid me sing, how can I but obey?
What though the lips may tremble, and the verse
That fain would grandly thy grand deeds rehearse
May trip and falter, and the stammering tongue
Leave all unrhymed the rhymes that should be sung?
I can but do thy bidding, as is meet,
Bowing in humble homage at thy feet—
Thy royal feet—and if my words are weak,
O crownèd One, 'twas thou didst bid me speak!

II.

Yet what is there to say,
Even on this proud day,
This day of days, that hath not oft been said?
What song is there to sing
That hath not oft been sung?

What laurel can we bring
That ages have not hung
A thousand times above their glorious dead ?
What crown to crown the living
Is left us for our giving,
That is not shaped to other brows
That wore it long ago ?
Our very vows but echo vows
Breathed centuries ago !
Earth has no choral strain,
No sweet or sad refrain,
No lofty pæan swelling loud and clear,
That Virgil did not know,
Or Danté, wandering slow
In mystic trances, did not pause to hear !
When gods from high Olympus came
To touch old Homer's lips with flame,
The morning stars together sung
To teach their raptures to his tongue.
For him the lonely ocean moaned ;
For him the mighty winds intoned
Their deep-voiced chantings, and for him
Sweet flower-bells pealed in forests dim.
From earth and sea and sky he caught
The spell of their divinest thought,
While yet it blossomed fresh and new
As Eden's rosebuds wet with dew !
Oh ! to have lived when earth was young,
With all its melodies unsung !
The dome of heaven bent nearer then
When gods and angels talked with men—
When Song itself was newly born,
The Incarnation of the Morn !
But now, alas ! all thought is old,
All life is but a story told,

And poet-tongues are manifold ;
 And he is bold who tries to wake,
 Even for God or Country's sake,
 In voice, or pen, or lute, or lyre,
 Sparks of the old Promethean fire !

III.

And yet—O Earth, thank God !—the soul of song
 Is as immortal as the eternal stars !
 O trembling heart ! take courage and be strong.
 Hark ! to a voice from yonder crystal bars :

*“ Did the roses blow last June ?
 Do the stars still rise and set ?
 And over the crests of the mountains
 Are the light clouds floating yet ?
 Do the rivers run to the sea
 With a deep, resistless flow ?
 Do the little birds sing north and south
 As the seasons come and go ?*

*“ Are the hills as fair as of old ?
 Are the skies as blue and far ?
 Have you lost the pomp of the sunset,
 Or the light of the evening star ?
 Has the glory gone from the morning ?
 Do the wild winds wail no more ?
 Is there now no thunder of billows
 Beating the storm-lashed shore ?*

*“ Is Love a forgotten story ?
 Is Passion a jester's theme ?
 Has Valor thrown down its armor ?
 Is Honor an idle dream ?*

*Is there no pure trust in woman?
 No conquering faith in God?
 Are there no feet strong to follow
 In the paths the martyrs trod?*

*" Did you find no hero graves
 When your violets bloomed last May—
 Prouder than those of Marathon,
 Or 'old Plata's day'?*

*When your red and white and blue
 On the free winds fluttered out,
 Were there no strong hearts and voices
 To receive it with a shout?*

*Oh! let the Earth grow old!
 And the burning stars grow cold!
 And, if you will, declare man's story told!
 Yet, pure as faith is pure,
 And sure as death is sure,
 As long as love shall live, shall song endure!"*

IV.

When, one by one, the stately, silent Years
 Glide like pale ghosts beyond our yearning sight,
 Vainly we stretch our arms to stay their flight,
 So soon, so swift they pass to endless night!
 We hardly learn to name them,
 To praise them or to blame them,
 To know their shadowy faces,
 Ere we see their empty places!
 Only once the glad Spring greets them;
 Only once fair Summer meets them;
 Only once the Autumn glory
 Tells for them its mystic story;
 Only once the Winter hoary
 Weaves for them its robes of light!

Years leave their work half-done ; like men, alas !
 With sheaves ungathered to their graves they pass,
 And are forgotten. What they strive to do
 Lives for a while in memory of a few ;
 Then over all Oblivion's waters flow—
 The Years are buried in the long ago !
 But when a Century dies, what room is there for tears ?
 Rather in solemn exaltation let us come,
 With roll of drum
 (Not muffled as in woe),
 With blare of bugles, and the liquid flow
 Of silver clarions, and the long appeal
 Of the clear trumpets ringing peal on peal ;
 With clash of bells, and hosts in proud array,
 To pay meet homage to its burial day !
 For its proud work is done. Its name is writ
 Where all the ages that come after it
 Shall read the eternal letters, blazoned high
 On the blue dome of the impartial sky.
 What ruthless fate can darken its renown,
 Or dim the lustre of its starry crown ?
 On mountain-peaks of Time each Century stands alone ;
 And each, for glory or for shame, hath reaped what it hath
 sown !

v.

But this—the one that gave thee birth
 A hundred years ago, O beauteous mother !
 This mighty Century had a mightier brother,
 Who from the watching earth
 Passed but last year ! Twin-born indeed were they—
 For what are twelve months to the womb of time
 Pregnant with ages ?—Hand in hand they climbed
 With clear, young eyes uplifted to the stars ;
 With great, strong souls that never stopped for bars,

Through storm and darkness up to glorious day !
Each knew the other's need ; each in his breast
The subtle tie of closest kin confessed ;
Counted the other's honor as his own ;
Nor feared to sit upon a separate throne ;
Nor loved each other less when—wondrous fate !—
One gave a Nation life, and one a State !

VI.

Oh ! rude the cradle in which each was rocked,
The infant Nation, and the infant State !
Rough nurses were the Centuries, that mocked
At mother-kisses, and for mother-arms
Gave their young nurslings sudden harsh alarms,
Quick blows and stern rebuffs. They bade them wait,
Often in cold and hunger, while the feast
Was spread for others, and, though last not least,
Gave them sharp swords for playthings, and the din
Of actual battle for the mimic strife

That childhood glories in !

Yet not the less they loved them. Spartans they,
Who could not rear a weak, effeminate brood.
Better the forest's awful solitude,
Better the desert spaces, where the day
Wanders from dawn to dusk and finds no life !

VII.

But over all the tireless years swept on,
Till side by side the Centuries grew old,
And the young Nation, great and strong and bold,
Forgot its early struggles, in triumphs later won !
It stretched its arms from East to West ;
It gathered to its mighty breast

From every clime, from every soil,
The hunted sons of want and toil ;
It gave to each a dwelling-place ;
It blent them in one common race ;
And over all, from sea to sea,
Wide flew the banner of the free !
It did not fear the wrath of kings,
Nor the dread grip of deadlier things—
Gaunt Famine with its ghastly horde,
Dishonor sheathing its foul sword,
Nor faithless friend, nor treacherous blow
Struck in the dark by stealthy foe ;
For over all its wide domain,
From shore to shore, from main to main,
From vale to mountain-top, it saw
The reign of plenty, peace, and law !

VIII.

Thus fared the Nation, prosperous, great, and free,
Prophet and herald of the good to be ;
And on its humbler way, in calm content,
The lesser State, the while, serenely went.
Safe in her mountain fastnesses she dwelt,
Her life's first cares forgot, its woes unfelt,
And thought her bitterest tears had all been shed,
For peace was in her borders, and God reigned overhead.

IX.

But suddenly over the hills there came
A cry that rent her with grief and shame—
A cry from the Nation in sore distress,
Stricken down in the pride of its mightiness !
With passionate ardor up she sprang,
And her voice like the peal of a trumpet rang—

“What ho! what ho! brave sons of mine,
Strong with the strength of the mountain pine!
To the front of the battle, away! away!
The Nation is bleeding in deadly fray,
The Nation, it may be, is dying to-day!
On, then, to the rescue! away! away!”

X.

Ah! how they answered let the ages tell,
For they shall guard the sacred story well!
Green grows the grass to-day on many a battle-field;
War's dread alarms are o'er; its scars are healed;
Its bitter agony has found surcease;
A re-united land clasps hands in peace.
But, oh! ye blessed dead, whose graves are strown
From where our forests make perpetual moan,
To those far shores where smiling Southern seas
Give back soft murmurs to the fragrant breeze—
Oh! ye who drained for us the bitter cup,
Think ye we can forget what ye have offered up?
The years will come and go, and other centuries die,
And generation after generation lie
Down in the dust; but, long as stars shall shine,
Long as Vermont's green hills shall bear the pine,
As long as Killington shall proudly lift
Its lofty peak above the storm-cloud's rift,
Or Mansfield hail the blue, o'erarching skies,
Or fair Mount Anthony in grandeur rise,
So long shall live the deeds that ye have done,
So deathless be the glory ye have won!

XI.

Not with exultant joy
And pride without alloy,
Did the twin Centuries rejoice when all was o'er.

•

What though the Nation rose
Triumphant o'er its foes ?
What though the State had gained
The meed of faith unstained ?
Their mighty hearts remembered the dead that came no
more !
Remembered all the losses,
The weary, weary crosses,
Remembered earth was poorer for the blood that had been
shed,
And knew that it was sadder for the story it had read !
So, clasping hands with somewhat saddened mien,
And eyes uplifted to the Great Unseen
That rules alike o'er Centuries and men,
Onward they walked serenely toward—the End !

XII.

One reached it last year. Ye remember well—
The wondrous tale there is no need to tell—
How the whole world bowed down beside its bier ;
How all the Nations came, from far or near,
Heaping their treasures on its mighty pall—
Never had kingliest king such funeral !
Old Asia rose, and, girding her in haste,
Swept in her jewelled robes across the waste,
And called to Egypt lying prone and hid
Where waits the Sphinx beside the pyramid ;
Fair Europe came with overflowing hands,
Bearing the riches of her many lands ;
Dark Afric, laden with her virgin gold,
Yet laden deeper with her woes untold ;
Japan and China in grotesque array,
And all the enchanted islands of Cathay !

•

XIII.

To-day the other dies.
It walked in humbler guise,
Nor stood where all men's eyes
Were fixed upon it.
Earth may not pause to lay
A wreath upon its bier,
Nor the world heed to-day
Our dead that lieth here !

Yet well they loved each other—
It and its greater brother.
To loftiest stature grown,
Each earned its own renown ;
Each sought of Time a crown,
And each has won it ;

XIV.

But what to us are Centuries dead,
And rolling Years forever fled,
Compared with thee, O grand and fair
Vermont—our Goddess-mother ?
Strong with the strength of thy verdant hills,
Fresh with the freshness of mountain-rills,
Pure as the breath of the fragrant pine,
Glad with the gladness of youth divine,
Serenely thou sittest throned to-day
Where the free winds that round thee play
Rejoice in thy waves of sun-bright hair,
O thou, our glorious mother !
Rejoice in thy beautiful strength and say
Earth holds not such another !

Thou art not old with thy hundred years,
Nor worn with toil, or care, or tears :
But all the glow of the summer-time
Is thine to-day in thy glorious prime !
Thy brow is fair as the winter-snows,
With a stately calm in its still repose ;
While the breath of the rose the wild bee sips,
Half-mad with joy, cannot eclipse
The marvellous sweetness of thy lips ;
And the deepest blue of the laughing skies
Hides in the depths of thy fearless eyes,
Gazing afar over land and sea
Wherever thy wandering children be !

Fold on fold,
Over thy form of grandest mould
Floweth thy robe of forest green,
Now light, now dark, in its emerald sheen.
Its brodered hem is of wild flowers rare,
With feathery fern-fronds light as air
Fringing its borders. In thy hair
Sprays of the pink arbutus twine,
And the curling rings of the wild grape vine.
Thy girdle is woven of silver streams ;
Its clasp with the opaline lustre gleams
Of a lake asleep in the sunset beams ;
And, half concealing
And half revealing,
Floats over all a veil of mist
Pale-tinted with rose and amethyst !

XV.

Arise, O noble mother of great sons,
Worthy to rank among earth's mightiest ones,
And daughters fair and beautiful and good,
Yet wise and strong in loftiest womanhood—

Rise from thy throne, and, standing far and high
Outlined against the blue, adoring sky,
Lift up thy voice, and stretch thy loving hands
In benediction o'er the waiting lands !
Take thou our fealty ! at thy feet we bow,
Glad to renew each oft-repeated vow !
No costly gifts we bring to thee to-day ;
No votive wreaths upon thy shrine we lay ;
Take thou our hearts, then !—hearts that fain would be
From this day forth, O goddess, worthier thee !

GETTYSBURG

1863-1889

I.

BROTHERS, is this the spot ?
Let the drums cease to beat ;
Let the tread of marching feet,
With the clash and clang of steel
And the trumpet's long appeal
(Cry of joy and sob of pain
In its passionate refrain)
Cease awhile,
Nor beguile
Thoughts that would rehearse the story
Of the past's remembered glory ;
Thoughts that would revive to-day
Stern War's rude, imperious sway ;
Waken battle's fiery glow
With its ardor and its woe,
With its wild, exulting thrills,
With the rush of mighty wills,
And the strength to do and dare—
Born of passion and of prayer !

II.

Let the present fade away,
And the splendors of to-day ;
For our hearts within us burn
As our glances backward turn.

What rare memories awaken
As the tree of life is shaken,
And its storied branches blow
In the winds of long ago !
Do ye not remember, brothers,
Ere the war-days how 'twas said
Grand, heroic days were over
And proud chivalry was dead ?
Still we saw the glittering lances
Gleaming through the old romances,
Still beheld the watch-fires burning
On the cloudy heights of Time ;
 And from fields that they had won,
 When the stormy fight was done,
Saw victorious knights returning
Flushed with triumph's joy sublime !
 For the light of song and story
 Kindled with supernal glory
Plains where ancient heroes fought ;
And illumined, with a splendor
Rare and magical and tender,
All the mighty deeds they wrought.
But we thought the sword of battle,
Long unused, had lost its glow,
And the sullen war-gods slumbered
Where their altar-fires burned low !

III.

Was the nation dull and sodden,
 Buried in material things ?
'Twas the chrysalis, awaiting
The sure stirring of its wings !
For when rang the thrilling war-cry
 Over all the startled land,

And the fiery cross of battle,
 Flaming, sped from hand to hand,
Then how fared it, O my brothers ?
 Were men false or craven then ?
 Did they falter ?
 Did they palter ?
Did they question why or when ?
Oh, the story shall be told
Until earth itself is old,
How, from mountain and from glen,
More than thrice ten thousand men
Heard the challenge of the foe,
Heard the nation's cry of woe,
Heard the summoning to arms,
And the battle's loud alarms !
In tumultuous surprise,
Lo, their answer rent the skies ;
And its quick and strong heart-thrills
Rocked the everlasting hills !
Forth from blossoming fields they sped
To the fields with carnage red !
Left the plowshare standing still ;
Left the bench, the forge, the mill ;
Left the quiet walks of trade
And the quarry's marble shade ;
Left the pulpit and the court,
Careless ease and idle sport ;
Left the student's cloistered halls
In the old, gray college walls ;
Left young love-dreams, dear and sweet,
War's stern front, unblenched, to meet !
Oh, the strange and sad amaze
Of those unforgotten days,
When the boys whom we had guided,
Nursed and loved, caressed and chided,

Suddenly, as in a night,
Sprang to manhood's proudest height ;
And with calmly smiling lips,
As who life's rarest goblet sips,
Dauntless, with unhurried breath,
Marched to danger and to death !

IV.

Soldiers, is this the spot ?
Fair the scene is, calm and fair,
In this still October air ;
Far blue hills look gently down
On the happy, tranquil town,
And the ridges nearer by
Steeped in autumn sunshine lie.
Laden orchards, smiling fields,
Rich in all that nature yields ;
Bright streams winding in and out
Fertile meadows round about,
Lowing herds and hum of bee,
Birds that flit from tree to tree,
Children's voices ringing clear,
All we touch or see or hear—
Fruit of gold in silver set—
Tell of joy and peace. And yet—
Soldiers, is this the spot
That can never be forgot ?
Was it here that shot and shell
Poured as from the mouth of hell,
Drenched the shrinking, trembling plain
With a flood of fiery rain ?
Was it here the awful wonder
Of the cannon's crashing thunder
Shook the affrighted hills, and made
Even the stolid rocks afraid ?

Was it here an armèd host,
Like two clouds where lightnings play,
Or two oceans, tempest tost,
Clashed and mingled in the fray ?
Here that, 'mid the din and smoke,
Roar of guns and sabre stroke,
Tramp of furious steeds, where moan
Horse and rider, both o'erthrown,
Lurid fires and battle yell,
Forty thousand brave men fell ?

v.

O brothers, words are weak !
What tongue shall dare to speak ?
Even song itself grows dumb
In this high presence.—Come
Forth, ye whose ashes lie
Under this arching sky !
Speak ye in accents clear
Words that we fain would hear !
Tell us when your dim eyes,
Holy with sacrifice,
Looked through the battle smoke
Up to the skies ;
Tell us, ye valiant dead,
When your souls starward fled,
How from the portals far
Where the immortals are,
Chieftains and vikings old,
Heroes and warriors bold,
Men whom old Homer sung,
Men of each age and tongue,
Knights from a thousand fields
Bearing their blazoned shields
Thronged forth to meet ye !

Tell us how, floating down,
Each with a martyr's crown,
They who had kept the faith,
Grandly defying death ;
They who for conscience' sake
Felt their firm heartstrings break ;
They who for truth and right
Unshrinking fought the fight ;
They who through fire and flame
Passed on to deathless fame,

 Hastened to greet ye !
Tell how they welcomed ye,
Hailed and applauded ye,
Claimed ye as comrades true,
Brave as the world e'er knew ;
Led your triumphant feet
Up to the highest seat,
Crowned ye with amaranth,
 Laurel and palm.

VI.

Alas, alas ! They speak not !
The silence deep they break not !
Heaven keeps its martyred ones
Beyond or moon or suns ;
And Valhalla keeps its braves,
Leaving to us their graves !
Then let these graves speak for them
As long as the wind sweeps o'er them !
As long as the sentinel ridges
Keep guard on either hand ;
As long as the hills they fought for
Like silent watch-towers stand !

VII.

Yet not of them alone
Round each memorial stone
Shall the proud breezes whisper as they pass,
Rustling the faded leaves
On chilly autumn eves,
And swaying tenderly the sheltering grass !
O ye who on this field
Knew not the joy to yield
Your young, glad lives in glorious conflict up ;
Ye who as bravely fought,
Ye who as grandly wrought,
Draining with them war's darkly bitter cup,
As long as stars endure
And God and Truth are sure ;
While Love still claims its own,
While Honor holds its throne
And Valor hath a name,
Still shall these stony pages
Repeat to all the ages
The story of your fame !

VIII.

O beautiful one, my Country,
Thou fairest daughter of Time,
To-day are thine eyes unclouded
In the light of a faith sublime !
No thunder of battle appals thee ;
From thy woe thou hast found release ;
From the graves of thy sons steals only
This one soft whisper,—“ PEACE ! ”

“NO MORE THE THUNDER OF CANNON”

No more the thunder of cannon,
No more the clashing of swords,
No more the rage of the contest,
Nor the rush of contending hordes ;
But, instead, the glad reunion,
The clasping of friendly hands,
The song, for the shout of battle,
Heard over the waiting lands.

O brothers, to-night we greet you
With smiles, half sad, half gay—
For our thoughts are flying backward
To the years so far away—
When with you who were part of the conflict,
With us who remember it all,
Youth marched with his waving banner,
And his voice like a bugle call !

We would not turn back the dial,
Nor live over the past again ;
We would not the path re-travel,
Nor barter the “ now ” for the “ then.”
Yet, oh, for the bounding pulses,
And the strength to do and dare,
When life was one grand endeavor,
And work clasped hands with prayer !

But blessed are ye, O brothers,
Who feel in your souls alway
The thrill of the stirring summons
You heard but to obey ;
Who, whether the years go swift,
Or whether the years go slow,
Will wear in your hearts forever
The glory of long ago !

GRANT

AUGUST 8, 1885

GOD sends his angels where he will,
From world to world, from star to star ;
They do his bidding as they fly,
Whether or near or far !

Whither it went, or what its quest,
I know not ; but one August day
A great white angel through the far
Dim spaces took its way ;

Until below it our fair earth,
Like a rich jewel fitly hung—
An emerald set with silver gleams—
In the blue ether swung.

The angel looked ; the angel paused ;
Then down the starry pathway swept,
Till mount and valley, hill and plain,
Beneath its vision slept.

· Poised on a far blue mountain peak,
It saw the land, from sea to sea,
Lifting in veiled splendor up
The banner of the free !

From tower and turret, spire and dome,
From stately halls, and cabins rude,

Where crag and cliff and forest meet
In awful solitude,

It saw strange, sombre pennants float,
Black shadows on the summer breeze
That bore, from shore to shore, the wail
Of solemn symphonies.

It saw long files of armed men,
Clad in a garb of faded blue,
Pass up and down the sorrowing land
As if in grand review.

It saw through crowded city streets,
Funereal trains move to and fro,
With tolling bells, and muffled drums,
And trumpets wailing low.

Descending then the angel sought
A stern, sad man of many cares—
Ah, oft before have mortals talked
With angels, unawares !

The angel spake, as man to man—
“What does it mean, O friend ?” it cried,
“These sad-browed hosts, these weeds of woe,
This mourning far and wide ?”

The stranger answered in amaze—
“Know you not what the whole world knows ?
To his long home, thus grandly borne,
Earth’s greatest warrior goes.

“The foremost soldier of his age,
The victor on full many a field—
Who saw the bravest of the brave
To his stern prowess yield.”

The angel sighed. "That means," it said,
"Tumult and anguish, pain and death,
And countless sons of men borne down
By the fierce cannon's breath!"

Then passed from sight the heavenly guest,
And from the mountain-top again
Took its far flight from North to South,
Above the homes of men.

But still, where'er it went, it saw
The starry banners half mast high,
And tower and turret hung with black
Against the reddening sky!

Still saw long ranks of armed men
Who for the blue had worn the gray—
Still saw the sad processions pass,
Darkening the summer day!

"Was this *their* conqueror whom you mourn?"
The angel said to one who kept
Lone watch where, deep in grass-grown graves,
Young Southern soldiers slept.

"Victor, yet friend," the answer came,
"Even theirs who here their life-blood poured!
He, when the bitter field was won,
Was first to sheathe the sword,

"And cry: 'O brothers, take my hand—
Brave foemen, let us be at peace!
O'er all the undivided land
Let clash of conflict cease!'"

The wondering angel went its way
From world to world, from star to star,

Where planet unto planet turned,
And suns blazed out afar.

“ Learn, learn, O universe,” it cried,
“ How great is he whose foemen lay
Their love and homage at his feet,
On this—his burial day!”

FRIAR ANSELMO
AND
OTHER POEMS

FRIAR ANSELMO

FRIAR ANSELMO for a secret sin
Sat bowed with grief the convent cell within ;
Nor dared, such was his shame, to lift his eyes
To the low wall whereon, in dreadful guise,
The dead CHRIST hung upon the cursèd tree,
Frowning, he thought, upon his misery.
What was his sin it matters not to tell.

But he was young and strong, the records say :
Perhaps he wearied of his narrow cell ;
Perhaps he longed to work, as well as pray ;
Perhaps his heart too warmly beat that day !
Perhaps—for life is long—the weary road
That he must travel, bearing as a load
The slow, monotonous hours that, one by one,
Dragged in a lengthening chain from sun to sun,
Appalled his eager spirit, and his vow
Pressed like an iron hand upon his brow.
Perhaps some dream of love, of home, of wife,
Had stirred this tumult in his lonely life,
Tempting his soul to barter heavenly bliss,
And sell its birthright for a woman's kiss !
At all events, the struggle had been hard ;
And as a bird from the glad ether barred,
So had he beat his wings till, bruised and torn,
He wished that night he never had been born !
And still the dead CHRIST on the cursèd tree
Seemed but to mock his hopeless misery ;

Still Mary mother turned her eyes away,
Nor saint nor angel bent to hear him pray !

The calm, cold moonlight through the casement shone ;
Weird shadows darkened on the floor of stone ;
Without, what solemn splendors ! and within
What fearful wrestlings with despair and sin !
Sudden and loud the cloister bell outrang ;
Afar a door swung to with sullen clang ;
And overhead he heard the rhythmic beat,
The measured monotone of many feet
Seeking the chapel for the midnight prayer.
Black wings seemed hovering round him in the air,
Beating him back when with a stifled moan
He would have sought the holy altar stone.
Then with a swift, sharp cry, prostrate he fell
Before the crucifix. " The gates of hell
Shall not prevail against me ! " loud he cried,
Stretching his arms to CHRIST, the crucified.
" By Thy dread cross, Thy dying agony,
Thine awful passion, LORD, deliver me ! "

Was it a dream ? The taunting demons fled ;
Through the dim cell a wondrous glory spread ;
And all the air was filled with rare perfumes
Wafted from censers rich with heavenly blooms.
Transfigured stood the CHRIST before his eyes,
Clothed in white samite, woven in Paradise,
And from the empty cross upon the wall
Streamed a wide splendor that encompassed all !
Was it a dream ? Anselmo's sight grew dim ;
The cloistered chamber seemed to reel and swim ;
Yet well his spirit knew the glorious guest,
And all his manhood rose to meet the test.
" What wilt Thou have me, LORD, to do ? " he cried
With pallid lips, and kissed the sacred feet.

And then in accents strangely calm, yet sweet,
These words he heard from CHRIST, the crucified,
The pitying CHRIST his inmost soul who read,
With all its wild unrest, its doubt and dread :
“ MAKE THOU A COPY OF MY HOLY WORD ! ”
Then mystic presences about him stirred ;
The vision faded. At the dawn of day
Prostrate and pallid in the dusk he lay.
Was it a dream ? GOD knows ! The narrow cell
Wore the old aspect he had learned so well,
And from the crucifix upon the wall
No glory streamed illuminating all !
Yet still a subtile fragrance filled the room ;
And looking round him in the soft, gray gloom,
Anselmo saw upon the fretted floor
An eagle's quill that this grave legend bore :
“ He works most nobly for his fellow-men
Who gives My word to them, by tongue or pen ! ”

Henceforth Anselmo prayed, but worked as well,
Nor felt the bondage of his cloister cell ;
For all his soul was filled with high intent,
He had no dream since its accomplishment—
To make a copy of the Holy Word,
Fairer than eye had seen, or ear had heard,
Or heart conceived of ! Day by day he wrought,
His fingers guided by a single thought ;
Forming each letter with the tenderest care,
With points of richest color here and there ;
With birds on swaying boughs, and butterflies
Poised on gay wings o'er sprays of eglantine ;
With tangled tracery of flower and vine
Through which gleamed cherub faces, half divine ;
With fading leaves that drift when summer dies,
And angels floating down the evening skies—

Each word an orison, each line a prayer !
 Slowly the work went on from day to day ;
 The seasons came and went ; May followed May ;
 Year after year passed by with stately tread
 To join the countless legions of the dead,
 Till Fra Anselmo, wan and bowed with age,
 Bent, a gray monk, above the parchment page.
 Death waited till he wrote the last fair line,
 Then touched his hand and closed the Book Divine !

.

The world has grown apace since then.
 He who would give GOD'S word to men,
 In cloistered cell, o'er parchment page,
 No longer bends from youth to age.
 Countless as leaves by autumn strewn
 The leaves of His great Book are blown
 Over the earth as wide and far
 As seeds by wandering breezes are !
 Yet none the less He speaks to-day
 As to Anselmo in his cell ;
 Bidding men speed upon their way
 His later messages as well.
 For not alone in Holy Book,
 In revelations dim and old,
 In sweetest stories simply told,
 In grand, prophetic strains that reach
 The loftiest heights of human speech,
 In martial hymn, or saintly psalm,
 In fiery threat, or logic calm,
 GOD'S messages are writ to-day—
 And He whose voice Mount Sinai shook
 Still bids men hearken and obey !
 He writes His name upon the hills ;
 He whispers in the mountain rills ;

He speaks through every flower that blows,
In breath of lily, tint of rose ;
In sultry calms ; in furious beat
Of the wild storm's tempestuous feet ;
In starlit night, and dewy morn,
And splendor of the day new-born !
He uttereth His thunders where
The shock of battle rends the air ;
He guides the fiery steeds of War ;
He rules unseen the maddening jar,
The hate and din of party strife,
And bids it serve the nation's life ;
He leads fair Science, where she walks
 With stately tread among the stars,
Or where, with reverent voice, she talks
 With Nature through the eternal bars !
His Word is uttered wheresoe'er
A human soul has ears to hear.
The royal message never errs ;
GOD send it true interpreters !

THE KING'S ROSEBUD

ONLY a blushing rosebud, folding up
Such wealth of sweetness in its dewy cup
That the whole air was like rare incense flung
From golden censers round high altars swung !
One day the king passed by with stately tread,
And, reaching forth his hand, he lightly said,
“ All sweets are mine ; therefore this rose I take,
And wear it in my bosom for Love's sake.”
Then, while the king passed on with smiling face,
The sweet rose gloried in its pride of place.

But ah ! the deeds that in Love's name are done !
The woeful wrack wrought underneath the sun !
Still with that smile upon his lip, the king
Laid his rash hand upon the beauteous thing ;
In hot haste tore the crimson leaves apart,
And drained the sweetness from its glowing heart ;
Seared the soft petals with its fiery breath,
Then tossed it from him to ignoble death !
When next with idle steps I passed that way,
Prone in the mire the king's fair rosebud lay.

SOMEWHERE

How can I cease to pray for thee ? Somewhere
In God's great universe thou art to-day :
Can He not reach thee with His tender care ?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray ?

What matters it to Him, who holds within
The hollow of His hand all worlds, all space,
That thou art done with earthly pain and sin ?
Somewhere within His ken thou hast a place.

Somewhere thou livest and hast need of Him :
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb ;
And somewhere still there may be valleys dim
That thou must pass to reach the hills sublime.

Then all the more, because thou canst not hear
Poor human words of blessing, will I pray,
O true, brave heart ! God bless thee, whereso'er
In His great universe thou art to-day !

PERADVENTURE

I AM thinking to-night of the little child
That lay on my breast three summer days,
Then swiftly, silently, dropped from sight,
While my soul cried out in sore amaze.

It is fifteen years ago to-night ;
Somewhere, I know, he has lived them through,
Perhaps with never a thought or dream
Of the mother-heart he never knew !

Is he yet but a babe ? or has he grown
To be like his brothers, fair and tall,
With a clear, bright eye, and a springing step,
And a voice that rings like a bugle call ?

I loved him. The rose in his waxen hand
Was wet with the dew of my falling tears ;
I have kept the thought of my baby's grave
Through all the length of these changeful years.

Yet the love I gave him was not like that
I give to-day to my other boys,
Who have grown beside me, and turned to me
In all their griefs and in all their joys.

Do you think he knows it ? I wonder much
If the dead are passionless, cold, and dumb ;
If into the calm of the deathless years
No thrill of a human love may come !

Perhaps sometimes from the upper air

He has seen me walk with his brothers three ;

Or felt in the tender twilight hour

The breath of the kisses they gave to me !

Over his birthright, lost so soon,

Perhaps he has sighed as the swift years flew ;

O child of my heart ! you shall find somewhere

The love that on earth you never knew !

RENA

(A LEGEND OF BRUSSELS)

I.

ST. GUDULA'S bells were chiming for the midnight, sad and
slow,

In the ancient town of Brussels, many and many a year ago,

And St. Michael, poised so grandly on his lofty, airy height,
Seemed transfigured in the glory of the full moon's tender
light,

When, a fair and saintly maiden crowned with locks of
palest gold,

Rena stood beside her lover, son of Hildebrand the Bold.

She with grief and tears was pallid ; but his face was hard
and stern :

All the passion of his being in his dark eyes seemed to burn.

"Never dream that I will give thee back thy plighted faith,"
he cried,

"By St. Michael's sword I swear it, thou, my love, shalt be
my bride !"

"Nay, but hear me," she responded ; "hear the words that
I must speak ;

I must speak, and thou must hearken, though my heart is
like to break.

“ Yestermorn, as I sat spinning blithely at my cottage door,
Straightway fell a stately shadow in the sunshine on the
floor ;

“ And a figure stood before me, so majestic and so grand,
That I knew it in a moment for the mighty Hildebrand—

“ Stood and gazed on me till downward at my feet the distaff
dropped,
And in all my veins the pulsing of the swift life-current
stopped.

“ ‘ Thou art Rena,’ then he uttered, and he swore a dreadful
oath,
And the tempest of his anger beat on me and on us both.

“ ‘ She who thinks to wed with Volmar must have lands and
gold,’ said he,
‘ Or must come of noble lineage, fit to mate with mine and
me !

“ ‘ Thou art but a peasant maiden, empty-handed, lowly
born ;
All the ladies of my castle would look down on thee with
scorn.

“ ‘ Even he will weary of thee when his passion once is spent,
Vainly cursing her who doomed him to an endless discontent !’

“ Then I, trembling, rose up slowly, and I looked him in
the face,
Though the dreadful frown it wore seemed to darken all the
place.

“ ‘Sir, I thank you for this warning,’ said I, speaking low and clear,

‘ But the laughter of your ladies I must teach my heart to bear.

“ ‘For the rest—your son is noble—and my simple womanhood

He will hold in loving honor, as a saint the holy rood !’

“ Oh ! then his stern face whitened, and a bitter laugh laughed he :

‘ Truly this my son is noble, and he shall not wed with thee.

“ ‘Hear my words now, and remember ! for by this good sword I swear,

And by Michael standing yonder, watching us from upper air,

“ ‘If he dares to place a wedding-ring upon your dowerless hand,

On his head shall fall a father’s curse—the curse of Hildebrand !’

“ O, my Volmar ! Then the earth rocked, and I fell down in a swoon ;

When I woke the room was silent ; it was past the hour of noon ;

“ And I waited for thy coming, as the captive waits for death,

With a mingled dread and longing, and a half-abated breath !”

Straight the young man bowed before her, as before a holy shrine :

“ Never hand of high-born lady was more richly dowered than thine !

“What care I for gold or honors, or—my—father’s—curse?”
he said ;
But the words died out in shudders, and his face grew like
the dead.

Then she twined her white arms round him, and she murmured, sweet and low,
As the night wind breathing softly over banks where violets
blow :

“ ‘ He who is accursed of father, he shall be accursed of
God,’
Long ago said one who followed where the holy prophets
trod.

“ Kiss me once, then, O my Volmar ! just once more, my
Volmar dear,
Even as you would kiss my white lips if I lay upon my bier !

“ For a gulf as dark as death has opened wide ’twixt thee
and me ;
Neither thou nor I can cross it, and thy wife I may not be ! ”

II.

ONCE again the bells of midnight chimed from St. Gudula’s
towers,
While St. Michael watched the city slumbering through the
ghostly hours.

But no slumber came to Rena where she moaned in bitter
pain,
For the anguish of that parting wrought its work on heart
and brain.

Suddenly the air grew heavy as with magical perfume,
And a weird and wondrous splendor filled the dim and silent
room.

In the middle of the chamber stood a lady fair and sweet,
With bright tresses falling softly to her small and sandalled
feet.

Flushed her cheeks were as a wild rose, and the glory of her
eyes
Was the laughing light and glory of the kindling morning
skies.

Airy robes of lightest tissue from her white arms floated free ;
They seemed woven of the mist that curls above the azure
sea,

Wrought in curious devices, star and wheel and leaf and
flower,
That, like frost upon a window-pane, might vanish in an
hour.

In her hands she bore a cushion, quaintly fashioned, strange-
ly set
With small silver pins that spanned it like a branching coro-
net ;

And from threads of finest texture swung light bobbins to and
fro,
As the lady stood illumined in the weird and wondrous
glow.

Not a single word she uttered ; but, as silent as a shade,
Down the room she swiftly glided and beside the startled
maid

Knelt, a radiant vision, smiling into Rena's wondering eyes,
Giving arch yet gracious answer to her tremulous surprise.

Then she laid the satin cushion on the wondering maiden's
knee,

And to all her mute bewilderment, no syllable spake she.

But, as in and out and round about, the silver pins among,
Flashed the white hand of the lady, and the shining bobbins
swung,

Lo ! a web of fairy lightness like the misty robe she wore,
Swiftly grew beneath her fingers, drifting downward to the
floor !

And as Rena looked and wondered, inch by inch the marvel
grew,

Till the eastern windows brightened as the gray dawn strug-
gled through.

Then the lady's hand touched Rena's, and she pointed far
away,

Where the palace towers were gleaming in the first red light
of day.

But when once again the maiden turned her glance within the
room,

With the lady fair had vanished all the splendor and per-
fume.

Still the satin cushion lay there, quaintly fashioned, strangely
set

With the silver pins that spanned it like a branching coro-
net ;

Still the light web she had woven lay in drifts upon the floor,
Like the mist wreaths resting softly on some lone, enchanted
shore !

III.

SLOWLY Rena raised the cushion, with her sweet eyes shining clear,
Lightly tossed the fairy bobbins, half in gladness, half in fear.

Ah! not vain had been her watching as the lovely lady wrought;
All the magic of her fingers her own cunning hand had caught!

Many a day above the cushion Rena's peerless head was bent,
And through many a solemn night she labored on with sweet intent.

For, mayhap, the mystic marvels that she wove might bring her gold—
A fair dowry fit to match the pride of Hildebrand the Bold!

Then she braided up her long hair, and put on her russet gown,
And with wicker basket laden passed she swiftly through the town,

To the palace where Queen Ildegar, with dames of high degree,
In a lofty oriel window sat, the beauteous morn to see.

In the door-way she stood meekly, till the queen said, "Maiden fair,
What have you in yonder basket that you carry with such care?"

Eagerly she raised her blue eyes, hovering smiles and tears
between,
Then across the room she glided, and knelt down before the
queen.

Lifting up the wicker cover, "Saints in heaven!" cried Ilde-
gar,
"Here are tissues fit for angels, wrought with wreath and
point and star,

"In most curious devices! Never saw I aught so rare—
Where found you these frail webs woven of the lightest sum-
mer air?"

"Well they may be fit for angels," said she, underneath her
breath;

"O my lady, hear a story that is strange and true as death."

But ere yet the tale was ended, up rose good Queen Ildegar,
And she sent her knights and pages to the castle riding far.

"Bring me Hildebrand and Volmar, ere the sun goes down!"
she cried,

"Ho! my ladies, for a wedding, and your queen shall bless
the bride!

"I will buy these airy wonders, and this maiden in her hand
Shall a dowry hold as royal as the noblest in the land."

So they combed her shining tresses, and they brought her
robes of silk,
Broidered thick with gold and silver, on a ground as white
as milk.

But she whispered, "Sweetest ladies, let me wear my russet
gown,
That I wore this happy morning walking blithely through the
town.

“ I am but a peasant maiden, all unused to grand estate,
And for robes of silken splendor, dearest ladies, let me
wait ! ”

Then the good queen, smiling brightly, from the wicker basket took
Lightest web of quaintest pattern, and its filmy folds outshook.

With her own white hand she laid it over Rena's golden hair,
And she cried, “ Oh, look, my ladies ! Ne'er before was
bride so fair ! ”

A SECRET

IT is your secret and mine, love !
Ah, me ! how the dreary rain
With a slow persistence, all day long
Dropped on the window-pane !
The chamber was weird with shadows
And dark with the deepening gloom
Where you in your royal womanhood,
Lay waiting for the tomb.

They had robed you all in white, love ;
In your hair was a single rose—
A marble rose it might well have been
In its cold and still repose !
O, paler than yonder carven saint,
And calm as the angels are,
You seemed so near me, my beloved,
Yet were, alas, so far !

I do not know if I wept, love ;
But my soul rose up and said—
“ My heart shall speak unto her heart,
Though here she is lying—dead !
I will give her a last love-token
That shall be to her a sign
In the dark grave—or beyond it—
Of this deathless love of mine.”

So I sought me a little scroll, love ;
And thereon, in eager haste,

Lest another's eye should read them
Some mystic words I traced.
Then close in your claspèd fingers,
Close in your waxen hand,
I placed the scroll for an amulet,
Sure you would understand !

The secret is yours and mine, love !
Only we two may know
What words shine clear in the darkness,
Of your grave so green and low.
But if when we meet hereafter,
In the dawn of some fairer day,
You whisper those mystical words, love,
It is all I would have you say !

THIS DAY

I WONDER what is this day to you,
Looking down from the upper skies !
Is there a pang at your gentle heart ?
Is there a shade in your tender eyes ?
Do you think up there of the whispered words
That thrilled your soul long years ago ?
Does ever a haunting undertone
Blend with the chantings sweet and low ?

When this day dawned (if where you are
Skies grow red when the morn is near)
Did you know that before its close
The love once yours would be on its bier ?
Did you know that another's lip
Would redden with kisses once your own,
And the golden cup of a younger life
O'erflow with the wine once yours alone ?

Do you remember ? Ah, my saint,
Bend your ear from the ether blue !
Have you risen to heights so far
That earth and its loves are nought to you ?
Do you care that your place is filled ?
Does it matter that now at last
The turf above you has grown so deep
That its shadow overlies your past ?

O, belovèd, I may not know !

Heaven is afar, and the grave is dumb,
And out of the silence so profound

Neither token nor voice may come !

We try to think that we understand ;

But whether you wake, or whether you sleep,
Or whether our deeds are aught to you,
Is still a mystery strange and deep !

“ CHRISTUS ! ”

OVER the desolate sea-side town
With a terrible tumult the night came down,
And the fierce wind swept through the empty street,
With the drifting snow for a winding-sheet.
Elsie, the fisherman's daughter, in bed
Lay and listened in awe and dread,
But sprang to her feet in sudden fear
When over the tempest, loud and clear,
A voice cried, “ Christus ! ”

“ Christus ! Christus ! ” and nothing more.
Was it a cry at the cottage-door ?
She left her chamber with flying feet ;
She loosened the bolts with fingers fleet ;
She lifted the latch, but only the din
Of the furious storm and the snow swept in.
She looked without : not a soul was there,
But still rang out on the startled air
The strange cry, “ Christus ! ”

“ Christus ! Christus ! ” She slept at last,
Though the old house rocked in the wintry blast ;
And when she awoke the world was still,
A wide, white silence from sea to hill.
No creature stirred in the morning glow ;
There was not a footprint in the snow ;
Yet again through the hush, as faint and far
As if it came from another star,
A voice sighed “ Christus ! ”

“ Christus ! Christus ! ” Who can it be,
O Christ our Lord, that is calling Thee
In a foreign tongue, with a woe as wild
As that of some lost, forsaken child ?
She turned from the window with a startled gaze :
She clasped her hands in a pale amaze,
Harkening still, till again she heard,
As in a waking dream, the word—
That strange word, “ Christus ! ”

Then over the hill with weary feet
She toiled through the drifts to the village-street.
The villagers gathered in eager haste,
And all day long in the snowy waste
They sought in vain for the one who cried
To Him who of old was crucified :
Then, turning away with a laugh, they said,
“ ’Twas only the wild wind overhead,
Your cry of ‘ Christus ! ’ ”

She watched their going with earnest eyes :
Hark ! what voice to the taunt replies ?
The trees were still as if struck with death ;
The wind was soft as a baby’s breath ;
The sobbing sea was asleep at last,
Scourged no more by the furious blast ;
Yet, surely as ever from human tongue
A cry of grief or despair was wrung,
Some voice sighed, “ Christus ! ”

Burned on her cheek a sudden flame
As her heart’s strong throbbings went and came,
And she stood alone on the lonely shore,
Gazing the wide black waters o’er.

“ Whether it comes from heaven or hell,
 This voice I have learned to know too well—
 Whether from lips alive or dead,
 Or from the hovering air,” she said—
 “ Whether it comes from sea or land,
 I will not sleep till I understand
 This cry of ‘Christus !’ ”

“ Christus ! Christus ! ” Faint and slow
 Rose the wail from the drifted snow
 Under a low-browed, beetling rock,
 Strong to withstand the whirlwind’s shock.
 There, in the heart of the snowy mound,
 The buried form of a man she found—
 A Spanish sailor, with beard of brown
 Over his red scarf flowing down,
 And jewelled ears that were strange to see.
 She was bending over it, when—ah me !
 The shrill cry, “ Christus ! ”

Rang out as if from the stony lips
 Whence life had parted in drear eclipse,
 As if the soul of the dead man cried
 Again unto Christ the Crucified.
 The rose had fled from her cheeks so red,
 But still she knelt by his side and said,
 Under her breath, “ I must understand
 Whether from heaven or sea or land
 Comes that cry, ‘ Christus ! ’ ”

She laid her hand on the pulseless breast !
 What fluttered beneath the crimson vest ?
 A bird with plumage of green and gold,
 Nestling away from the piercing cold,

Was folded close to the silent heart
From which it had felt the life depart ;
And when she held it against her cheek,
As plainly as ever a bird could speak
It sobbed out, ' Christus! ' "

And evermore when the winds blew loud,
And the trees in the grasp of the storm were bowed,
And the lowering wings of the tempest beat
The drifting snow in the village-street,
Just as its master in death had cried
To Christ, the Holy, the Crucified,
Pouring his soul in one wild word—
Pray God that the cry in heaven was heard!—
The bird cried, " Christus! "

THE KISS

WHEN you lay before me dead,
In your pallid rest,
On those passive lips of thine
Not one kiss I pressed !

Did you wonder—looking down
From some higher sphere—
Knowing how we two had loved
Many and many a year ?

Did you think me strange and cold
When I did not touch,
Even with reverent finger-tips,
What I had loved so much ?

Ah ! when last you kissed me, dear,
Know you what you said ?
“ Take this last kiss, my beloved,
Soon shall I be dead !

“ Keep it for a solemn sign,
Through our love's long night,
Till you give it back again
On some morning bright.”

So I gave you no caress ;
But, remembering this,
Warm upon my lips I keep
Your last living kiss !

WHAT SHE THOUGHT

MARION showed me her wedding-gown
And her veil of gossamer lace to-night,
And the orange-blooms that to-morrow morn
Shall fade in her soft hair's golden light.
But Philip came to the open door :
Like the heart of a wild-rose glowed her cheek,
And they wandered off through the garden-paths
So blest that they did not care to speak.

I wonder how it seems to be loved ;
To know you are fair in someone's eyes ;
That upon someone your beauty dawns
Every day as a new surprise ;
To know that, whether you weep or smile,
Whether your mood be grave or gay,
Somebody thinks you, all the while,
Sweeter than any flower of May.

I wonder what it would be to love :
That, I think, would be sweeter far,—
To know that one out of all the world
Was lord of your life, your king, your star !
They talk of love's sweet tumult and pain :
I am not sure that I understand,
Though—a thrill ran down to my finger-tips
Once when—somebody—touched my hand !

I wonder what it would be to dream
Of a child that might one day be your own ;

Of the hidden springs of your life a part,
Flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone.
Marion stooped one day to kiss
A beggar's babe with a tender grace ;
While some sweet thought, like a prophecy,
Looked from her pure Madonna face.

I wonder what it must be to think
To-morrow will be your wedding-day,
And you, in the radiant sunset glow
Down fragrant flowery paths will stray,
As Marion does this blessed night,
With Philip, lost in a blissful dream.
Can she feel his heart through the silence beat ?
Does he see her eyes in the starlight gleam ?

Questioning thus, my days go on ;
But never an answer comes to me :
All love's mysteries, sweet as strange,
Sealed away from my life must be.
Yet still I dream, O heart of mine !
Of a beautiful city that lies afar ;
And there, some time, I shall drop the mask,
And be shapely and fair as others are.

WHAT NEED?

*"What need has the singer to sing?
And why should your poet to-day
His pale little garland of poesy bring,
On the altar to lay?
High-priests of song the harp-strings swept
Ages before he smiled or wept!"*

What need have the roses to bloom?
And why do the tall lilies grow?
And why do the violets shed their perfume
When night-winds breathe low?
They are no whit more bright and fair
Than flowers that breathed in Eden's air!

What need have the stars to shine on?
Or the clouds to grow red in the west,
When the sun, like a king, from the fields he has won,
Goes grandly to rest?
No brighter they than stars and skies
That greeted Eve's sweet, wondering eyes!

What need has the eagle to soar
So proudly straight up to the sun?
Or the robin such jubilant music to pour
When day is begun?
The eagles soared, the robins sung,
As high, as sweet, when earth was young!

What need, do you ask me? Each day
Hath a song and a prayer of its own,
As each June hath its crown of fresh roses, each May
Its bright emerald throne !
Its own high thought each age shall stir,
Each needs its own interpreter !

And thou, O, my poet, sing on !
Sing on until love shall grow old ;
Till patience and faith their last triumphs have won,
And truth is a tale that is told !
Doubt not, thy song shall still be new
While life endures and God is true !

TWO

WE two will stand in the shadow here,
To see the bride as she passes by ;
Ring soft and low, ring loud and clear,
Ye chiming bells that swing on high !
Look ! look ! she comes ! The air grows sweet
With the fragrant breath of the orange blooms,
And the flowers she treads beneath her feet
Die in a flood of rare perfumes !

She comes ! she comes ! The happy bells
With joyous clamor fill the air,
While the great organ dies and swells,
Soaring to trembling heights of prayer !
Oh ! rare are her robes of silken sheen,
And the pearls that gleam on her bosom's snow ;
But rarer the grace of her royal mien,
Her hair's fine gold, and her cheek's young glow.

Dainty and fair as a folded rose,
Fresh as a violet dewy sweet,
Chaste as a lily, she hardly knows
That there are rough paths for other feet.
For Love hath shielded her ; Honor kept
Watch beside her by night and day ;
And Evil out from her sight hath crept,
Trailing its slow length far away.

Now in her perfect womanhood,
In all the wealth of her matchless charms,

Lovely and beautiful, pure and good,
She yields herself to her lover's arms.
Hark! how the jubilant voices ring!
Lo! as we stand in the shadow here,
While far above us the gay bells swing,
I catch the gleam of a happy tear!

The pageant is over. Come with me
To the other side of the town, I pray,
Ere the sun goes down in the darkening sea,
And night falls around us, chill and gray.
In the dim church porch an hour ago,
We waited the bride's fair face to see;
Now Life has a sadder sight to show,
A darker picture for you and me.

No need to seek for the shadow here;
There are shadows lurking everywhere;
These streets in the brightest day are drear,
And black as the blackness of despair.
But this is the house. Take heed, my friend,
The stairs are rotten, the way is dim;
And up the flights, as we still ascend,
Creep stealthy phantoms dark and grim.

Enter this chamber. Day by day,
Alone in this chill and ghostly room,
A child—a woman—which is it, pray?—
Despairingly waits for the hour of doom!
Ah! as she wrings her hands so pale,
No gleam of a wedding ring you see;
There is nothing to tell. You know the tale—
God help her now in her misery!

I dare not judge her. I only know
That love was to her a sin and a snare,

While to the bride of an hour ago
It brought all blessings its hands could bear !
I only know that to one it came
Laden with honor, and joy, and peace ;
Its gifts to the other were woe and shame,
And a burning pain that shall never cease !

I only know that the soul of one
Has been a pearl in a golden case ;
That of the other a pebble thrown
Idly down in a way-side place,
Where all day long strange footsteps trod,
And the bold, bright sun drank up the dew !
Yet both were women. O righteous God,
Thou only canst judge between the two !

UNANSWERED

WHERE mountain-peaks rose far and high
Into the blue, unclouded sky,
And waves of green, like billowy seas,
Tossed proudly in the freshening breeze,

I rode one morning, late in June.
The glad winds sang a pleasant tune ;
The air, like draughts of rarest wine,
Made every breath a joy divine.

With roses all the way was bright ;
Yet there upon that upland height
The darlings of the early spring—
Blue violets—were blossoming.

And all the meadows, wide unrolled,
Were green and silver, green and gold,
Where buttercups and daisies spun
Their shining tissues in the sun.

Over its shallow, pebbly bed,
A sparkling river gayly sped,
Nor cared that deeper waters bore
A grander freight from shore to shore.

It sung, it danced, it laughed, it played,
In sunshine now, and now in shade ;

While every gnarled tree joyed to make
A greener garland for its sake.

Deep peace was in the summer air,
A peace all nature seemed to share ;
Yet even there I could not flee
The shadow of life's mystery !

A farm-house stood beside the way,
Low-roofed and rambling, quaint and gray ;
And where the friendly door swung wide
Red roses climbed on either side.

And thither, down the winding road
Near which the sparkling river flowed,
In groups, in pairs, the neighbors pressed,
Each in his Sunday raiment dressed.

A sober calm was on each face ;
Sweet stillness brooded o'er the place ;
Yet something of a festal air
The youths and maidens seemed to wear.

But, as I passed, an idle breeze
Swept through the quivering maple-trees ;
Chased by the winds in merry rout,
A fair, light curtain floated out.

And this I saw : a quiet room
Adorned with flowers of richest bloom—
A lily here, a garland there—
Fragrance and silence everywhere.

Then on I rode. But if a bride
Should there her happy blushes hide,
Or if beyond my vision lay
Some pale face shrouded from the day,

I could not tell. O joy and Pain,
Your voices join in one refrain !
So like ye are, we may not know
If this be gladness, this be woe !

THE CLAY TO THE ROSE

O BEAUTIFUL, royal Rose,
O Rose, so fair and sweet !
Queen of the garden art thou,
And I—the Clay at thy feet !

The butterfly hovers about thee ;
The brown bee kisses thy lips ;
And the humming-bird, reckless rover,
Their marvellous sweetness sips.

The sunshine hastes to caress thee
Flying on pinions fleet ;
The dew-drop sleeps in thy bosom,
But I—I lie at thy feet !

The radiant morning crowns thee ;
And the noon's hot heart is thine ;
And the starry night enfolds thee
In the might of its love divine ;

I hear the warm rain whisper
Its message soft and sweet ;
And the south-wind's passionate murmur,
While I lie low at thy feet !

It is not mine to approach thee ;
I never may kiss thy lips,
Or touch the hem of thy garment
With tremulous finger-tips.

Yet, O thou beautiful Rose !
Queen rose, so fair and sweet,
What were lover or crown to thee
Without the Clay at thy feet ?

AT THE LAST

WILL the day ever come, I wonder,
When I shall be glad to know
That my hands will be folded under
The next white fall of the snow ?
To know that when next the clover
Wooeth the wandering bee,
Its crimson tide will drift over
All that is left of me ?

Will I ever be tired of living,
And be glad to go to my rest,
With a cool and fragrant lily
Asleep on my silent breast ?
Will my eyes grow weary of seeing,
As the hours pass, one by one,
Till I long for the hush and the darkness
As I never longed for the sun ?

God knoweth ! Sometime, it may be,
I shall smile to hear you say :
“ Dear heart ! she will not waken
At the dawn of another day ! ”
And sometime, love, it may be,
I shall whisper under my breath :
“ The happiest hour of my life, dear,
Is this—the hour of my death ! ”

TO THE "BOUQUET CLUB"

O ROSEBUD garland of girls !

Who ask for a song from me,
To what sweet air shall I set my lay ?
What shall its key-note be ?
The flowers have gone from wood and hill ;
The rippling river lies white and still ;
And the birds that sang on the maple bough,
Afar in the South are singing now !

O Rosebud garland of girls !

If the whole glad year were May ;
If winds sang low in the clustering leaves,
And roses bloomed alway ;
If youth were all that there is of life ;
If the years brought nothing of care or strife,
Nor ever a cloud to the ether blue,
It were easy to sing a song for you !

Yet, O my garland of girls !

Is there nothing better than May ?
The golden glow of the harvest time !
The rest of the Autumn day !
This thought I give to you all to keep :
Who soweth good seed shall surely reap ;
The year grows rich as it groweth old,
And life's latest sands are its sands of gold !

EVENTIDE

WHENEVER, with reverent footsteps,
I pass through the open door
Of Memory's stately palace,
Where dwell the days of yore,
One scene, like a lovely vision,
Comes to me o'er and o'er.

'Tis a dim, fire-lighted chamber ;
There are pictures on the wall ;
And around them dance the shadows
Grotesque and weird and tall,
As the flames on the storied hearth-stone
Wavering rise and fall.

An ancient cabinet stands there,
That came from beyond the seas,
With a breath of spicy odors
Caught from the Indian breeze ;
And its fluted doors and moldings
Are dark with mysteries.

There's an old arm-chair in the corner,
Straight-backed and tall and quaint ;
Ah ! many a generation—
Sinner and sage and saint—
It hath held in its ample bosom
With murmur nor complaint !

In the glow of the fire-light playing,
A tiny, blithesome pair,
With the music of their laughter
Fill all the tranquil air—
A rosy, brown-eyed lassie,
A boy serenely fair. —

A woman sits in the shadow
Watching the children twain,
With a joy so deep and tender
It is near akin to pain,
And a smile and tear blend softly—
Sunshine and April rain !

Her heart keeps time to the rhythm
Of love's unuttered prayer,
As, with still hands lightly folded,
She listens, unaware,
Through all the children's laughter,
For a footfall on the stair.

I know the woman who sits there ;
Time hath been kind to her,
And the years have brought her treasures
Of frankincense and myrrh
Richer, perhaps, and rarer,
Than Life's young roses were.

But I doubt if ever her spirit
Hath known, or yet shall know,
The bliss of a happier hour,
As the swift years come and go,
Than this in the shadowy chamber
Lit by the hearth-fire's glow !

MY LOVERS

I HAVE four noble lovers,
Young and gallant, blithe and gay,
And in all the land no maiden
Hath a goodlier troupe than they!
And never princess, guarded
By knights of high degree,
Knew sweeter, purer homage
Than my lovers pay to me!

One of my noble lovers
Is a self-poised, thoughtful man,
Gravely gay, serenely earnest,
Strong to do, and bold to plan.
And one is sweet and sunny,
Pure as crystal, true as steel,
With a soul responding ever
When the truth makes high appeal.

And another of my lovers,
Bright and *debonair* is he,
Brave and ardent, strong and tender,
And the flower of courtesie.
Last of all, an eager student,
Upon lofty aims intent :
Manly force and gentle sweetness
In his nature rarely blent.

But when of noble lovers
All alike are dear and true,
And her heart to choose refuses,
Pray, what can a woman do ?
Ah, my sons ! For this I bless ye,
Even as I myself am blest,
That I know not which is dearest,
That I care not which is best !

THE LEGEND OF THE ORGAN-BUILDER

DAY by day the Organ-BUILDER in his lonely chamber
wrought ;

Day by day the soft air trembled to the music of his thought ;

Till at last the work was ended, and no organ voice so grand
Ever yet had soared responsive to the master's magic hand.

Ay, so rarely was it builded that whenever groom or bride
Who in God's sight were well pleasing in the church stood
side by side,

Without touch or breath the organ of itself began to play,
And the very airs of heaven through the soft gloom seemed
to stray.

He was young, the Organ-BUILDER, and o'er all the land his
fame

Ran with fleet and eager footsteps, like a swiftly rushing flame.

All the maidens heard the story ; all the maidens blushed
and smiled,

By his youth and wondrous beauty and his great renown be-
guiled.

So he sought and won the fairest, and the wedding-day was
set :

Happy day—the brightest jewel in the glad year's coronet !

But when they the portal entered, he forgot his lovely bride—
Forgot his love, forgot his God, and his heart swelled high
with pride.

“ Ah ! ” thought he, “ how great a master am I ! When the
organ plays,
How the vast cathedral arches will re-echo with my praise ! ”

Up the aisle the gay procession moved. The altar shone
afar,
With its every candle gleaming through soft shadows like a
star.

But he listened, listened, listened, with no thought of love or
prayer,
For the swelling notes of triumph from his organ standing
there.

All was silent. Nothing heard he save the priest's low
monotone,
And the bride's robe trailing softly o'er the floor of fretted
stone.

Then his lips grew white with anger. Surely God was pleased
with him
Who had built the wondrous organ for His temple vast and
dim ?

Whose the fault, then ? Hers—the maiden standing meekly
at his side !
Flamed his jealous rage, maintaining she was false to him—
his bride.

Vain were all her protestations, vain her innocence and
truth ;
On that very night he left her to her anguish and her ruth.

.

Far he wandered to a country wherein no man knew his name.
For ten weary years he dwelt there, nursing still his wrath
and shame.

Then his haughty heart grew softer, and he thought by night
and day
Of the bride he had deserted, till he hardly dared to pray—

Thought of her, a spotless maiden, fair and beautiful and
good ;
Thought of his relentless anger that had cursed her woman-
hood ;

Till his yearning grief and penitence at last were all com-
plete,
And he longed, with bitter longing, just to fall down at her
feet.

.

Ah ! how throbbed his heart when, after many a weary day
and night,

Rose his native towers before him, with the sunset glow alight !

Through the gates into the city on he pressed with eager
tread ;

There he met a long procession—mourners following the
dead.

“ Now, why weep ye so, good people ? and whom bury ye
to-day ?

Why do yonder sorrowing maidens scatter flowers along the
way ?

“ Has some saint gone up to Heaven ? ” “ Yes,” they an-
swered, weeping sore :

“ For the Organ-Builder’s saintly wife our eyes shall see no
more ;

“And because her days were given to the service of God’s
poor,
From His church we mean to bury her. See ! yonder is the
door.”

No one knew him ; no one wondered when he cried out,
white with pain ;
No one questioned when, with pallid lips, he poured his
tears like rain.

“ ’Tis someone whom she has comforted who mourns with
us,” they said,
As he made his way unchallengèd, and bore the coffin’s head.

Bore it through the open portal, bore it up the echoing aisle,
Set it down before the altar, where the lights burned clear
the while :

When, oh, hark ! the wondrous organ of itself began to play
Strains of rare, unearthly sweetness never heard until that
day !

All the vaulted arches rang with the music sweet and clear ;
All the air was filled with glory, as of angels hovering near ;

And ere yet the strain was ended, he who bore the coffin’s
head,
With the smile of one forgiven, gently sank beside it—dead.

They who raised the body knew him, and they laid him by
his bride ;
Down the aisle and o’er the threshold they were carried side
by side ;

While the organ played a dirge that no man ever heard be-
fore,
And then softly sank to silence—silence kept for evermore.

BUTTERFLY AND BABY BLUE

BUTTERFLY and Baby Blue,
Did you come together
Floating down the summer skies,
In the summer weather ?
Seems to me you're much alike,
Airy, fairy creatures,
Though I small resemblance find
In your tiny features !

Butterfly has gauzy wings,
Bright with jewelled splendor ;
Baby Blue has pink-white arms,
Rosy, warm, and tender.
Butterfly has golden rings,
Charming each beholder ;
Baby wears a knot of blue
On each dimpled shoulder.

Butterfly is never still,
Always in a flutter ;
And of dainty Baby Blue
The same truth I utter !
Butterfly on happy wing
In the sunshine dances ;
Baby Blue for sunshine has
Mother's smiles and glances !

Butterfly seeks honey-dew
In a lily palace ;
Baby Blue finds nectar sweet
In a snow-white chalice.
Butterfly will furl its wings
When the air grows colder ;
While dear Baby Blue will be
Just a trifle older !

Ah ! the days are growing short,
Soon the birds will leave us,
And of all the garden flowers
Cruel frost bereave us.
Butterfly and Baby Blue,
Do not go together,
Sailing through the autumn skies
In the autumn weather !

KING IVAN'S OATH

KING IVAN ruled a mighty land
Girt by the sea on either hand ;
A goodly land as e'er the sun
In its long journey looked upon !
His knights were loyal, brave, and true,
Eager their lord's behests to do ;
His counsellors were wise and just,
Nor ever failed his kingly trust ;
The nations praised him, and the state
Grew powerful, and rich, and great ;
While still with long and loud acclaim,
His people hailed their monarch's name !

Fronting the east, a stately pile,
The palace caught the sun's first smile ;
Lightly its domes and arches sprung,
As earth's glad hills when earth was young ;
And miracles of airy grace,
Each tower and turret soared in space.
Within——But here no rhythmic flow
Of words with light and warmth aglow
Can tell the story. Not more fair
Are your own castles hung in air !
Painter and sculptor there had wrought
The utmost beauty of their thought ;
There the rich fruit of Persian looms
Glowed darkly bright as tropic blooms ;

There fell the light like golden mist,
Filtered through clouds of amethyst ;
There bright-winged birds and odorous flowers
With song and fragrance filled the hours ;
There Pleasure flung the portals wide,
And soul and sense were satisfied !

The queen ? No fairer face than hers
E'er smiled upon its worshippers ;
And she was good as fair, 'twas said,
And loved the king ere they were wed.
And he ? No doubt he loved her, too,
After a kingly fashion—knew
She had a right his throne to share,
And would be mother of his heir.
But yet, to do him justice, he
Sometimes forgot his royalty—
Forgot his kingly crown, and then
Loved, and made love, like other men !

There seemed no shadow near the throne ;
Yet oft the great king walked alone,
Hands clasped behind him, head bowed down,
And on his royal face a frown.
Sat Mordēcai within his gate ?
What scoffing spectre mocked his state ?
What demon held him in a spell ?
Alas ! the sweet queen knew too well !
Apples of Sodom ate he, since
She had not borne to him a prince,
Though thrice his hope had budded fair,
And he had counted on an heir.
Three little daughters, dainty girls
With sunshine tangled in their curls,
Bloomed in the palace ; but no son—

The long-expected, waited one,
Flower of the state, and pride of all—
Grew at the king's side, straight and tall!

The king was angered. It may be
No worse than other men was he ;
But—a high tower upon a hill—
His light shone far for good or ill !
In from the chase one day he rode ;
To the queen's chamber fierce he strode ;
Where bending o'er her 'broidery frame,
Her pale cheeks burned with sudden flame
At his quick coming. Up she rose,
Stirred from her wonted calm repose,
A lily flushing when the sun
Its stately beauty looked upon !
Alas ! alas ! so blind was he—
Or else he did not care to see—
He had no pity, though she stood
In perfect flower of womanhood !
“ You bear to me no son,” he said ;
Then flinging back his haughty head :
“ Each base-born peasant has an heir,
His name to keep, his crust to share,
While I—the king of this broad land—
Have no son near my throne to stand !
Who, then, shall reign when I am dead ?
Who wield the sceptre in my stead ?
Inherit all my pride and power,
And wear my glory as his dower ?
Give me a man-child, who shall be
Lord of the realm, himself, and me ! ”

Then pallid lips made slow reply—
“ God ordereth. Not you nor I ! ”

His brow flushed hot ; a sudden clang
As of arms throughout the chamber rang,
And turning on his heel, he threw
Back wrathful answer : " That may do
For puling women—not for me !
Now, by my good sword, we shall see !
So help me Heaven, I will not brook
On a girl's face again to look !
And when you next shall bear a child,
Though fair a babe as ever smiled,
If it be not a princely heir,
By all the immortal gods, I swear
I ne'er will speak to it, nor break
My soul's stern silence for Love's sake ! "

Then forth he fared and rode away,
Nor saw the queen again that day—
The hapless queen, who to the floor
Sank prone and breathless, as the door
Swung to behind him, and his tread
Down the long arches echoèd.
In truth she was in sorry plight
When her maids found her late that night,
The king learned that which spoiled his rest,
But kept the secret in his breast !

.

At length, when months had duly sped,
High streamed the banners overhead,
And all the bells rang out at morn
In jubilant peals—a Prince was born !
Now let the joyous music ring !
Now let the merry minstrels sing !
Now pour the wine and crown the feast
With fruits and flowers of all the East !

Now let the votive candles shine
And garlands bloom on every shrine !
Now let the young, with flying feet
Time to bewildering music beat,
And let the old their joys rehearse
In stirring tale, or flowing verse !
Now fill with shouts the waiting air,
And scatter largess everywhere !

Ah ! who so happy as the king ?
Swift flew the hours on eager wing ;
And the boy grew apace, until
The second summer, sweet and still,
Dropped roses round him as he played
Where arched the leafy colonnade.
How fair he was tongue cannot say,
But he was fairer than the day ;
And never princely coronet
On brow of nobler mould was set ;
Nor ever did its jewels gleam
Above an eye of brighter beam ;
And never yet where sunshine falls,
Flooding with light the cottage walls,
'Mid hum of bee, or song of birds,
Or tenderest breath of loving words,
Blossomed a sweeter child than he !
How the king joyed his strength to see,
Counting the weeks that flew so fast—
Each fuller, happier than the last !
Six months had passed since he could walk ;
Was it not time the prince should talk ?
Ah ! baby words with tripping feet !
Ah ! baby laughter, silver sweet !

At length within the palace rose
Rumor so strange that friends and foes

Forgot their love, forgot their hate,
Pausing to croon and speculate.
Vague whispers floated in the air ;
A hint of mystery here and there ;
A sudden hush, a startled glance,
Quick silences and looks askance.
Thus day by day the wonder grew,
Till o'er the kingdom wide it flew.
The prince—his father—what was this
Strange tale so surely told amiss ?
The young prince dumb ? Who dared to say
That nature such a prank could play ?
Dumb to the king ? In silence bound,
With voiceless lips that gave no sound
When the king questioned ?—Yet, no lute,
Nor chiming bell, nor silver flute,
Nor lark's song, high in ether hung,
Rang clearer than the prince's tongue !

The court physicians came and went ;
Learned men from all the continent
Gave wise opinions, talked of laws,
Stroked their gray beards, nor found the cause.
Then bribes were tried, and threats. The child,
As one bewildered, sighed and smiled,
In a wild storm of weeping broke,
Moved its red lips, but never spoke.

The changeful years rolled on apace ;
The young prince wore a bearded face ;
The good queen died ; the king grew gray ;
A generation passed away.
Courtiers forgot to tell the tale ;
Gossip itself grew old and stale.
But never once, in all the years
That bore such freight of joys and tears,

Was the spell broken : not one word
From son to sire was ever heard.
Mutely his father's face he scanned—
Mutely he clasped his agèd hand—
Mutely he kissed him when at last
To death's long slumber forth he passed !
Come weal or woe, he could not break
The mystic silence for Love's sake !

AT DAWN

AT dawn, when the jubilant morning broke,
And its glory flooded the mountain side,
I said, "'Tis eleven years to-day,
Eleven years since my darling died ! ”

And then I turned to my household ways,
To my daily tasks, without, within,
As happily busy all the day
As if my darling had never been !—

As if she had never lived, or died !
Yet when they buried her out of my sight
I thought the sun had gone down at noon,
And the day could never again be bright.

Ah, well ! As the swift years come and go,
It will not be long ere I shall lie
Somewhere under a bit of turf,
With my pale hands folded quietly.

And then someone who has loved me well—
Perhaps the one who has loved me best—
Will say of me as I said of her,
“ She has been just so many years at rest ”—

Then turn to the living loves again,
To the busy life, without, within,
And the day will go on from dawn to dusk,
Even as if I had never been !

Dear hearts ! dear hearts ! It must still be so !
The roses will bloom, and the stars will shine,
And the soft green grass creep still and slow,
Sometime over a grave of mine—

And over the grave in your hearts as well !
Ye cannot hinder it if ye would ;
And I—ah ! I shall be wiser then—
I would not hinder it if I could !

IN MEMORIAM

[Cyrus M. and Mary Ripley Fisher, lost on steamship Atlantic,
April 1, 1873.]

ONCE, long ago, with trembling lips I sung
Of one who, when the earliest flowers were seen,
So sweet, so dear, so beautiful and young,
Came home to sleep where kindred graves were green.

Soft was the turf we raised to give her room ;
Clear were the rain-drops, shining as they fell ;
Sweet the arbutus, with its tender bloom
Brightening the couch of her who loved it well.

Yet, in our blindness, how we wept that day,
When the earth fell upon her coffin-lid !
O, ye belovèd whom I sing *this* day,
Could we but know where your dear forms lie hid !

Could we but lay you down by her dear side,
Wrapped in the garments of eternal rest,
Where the still hours in slow succession glide,
And not a dream may stir the pulseless breast—

Where all day long the shadows come and go,
And soft winds murmur and sweet song-birds sing—
Where all night long the star-light's tender glow
Falls where the flowers you loved are blossoming—

Then should the tempest of our grief grow calm ;
Then moaning gales should vex our souls no more ;
And the clear swelling of our thankful psalm
Should drown the beat of surges on the shore.

But the deep sea will not give up its dead.
O, ye who know where your beloved sleep,
Bid heart's-ease bloom on each love-guarded bed,
And bless your God for graves whereon to weep !

WEAVING THE WEB

“THIS morn I will weave my web,” she said,
As she stood by her loom in the rosy light,
And her young eyes, hopefully glad and clear,
Followed afar the swallow’s flight.

“As soon as the day’s first tasks are done,
While yet I am fresh and strong,” said she,

“I will hasten to weave the beautiful web
Whose pattern is known to none but me !

“I will weave it fine, I will weave it fair,
And ah ! how the colors will glow !” she said ;

“So fadeless and strong will I weave my web
That perhaps it will live after I am dead.”

But the morning hours sped on apace ;

The air grew sweet with the breath of June ;
And young Love hid by the waiting loom,
Tangling the threads as he hummed a tune.

“Ah, life is so rich and full !” she cried,

“And morn is short though the days are long !
This noon I will weave my beautiful web,
I will weave it carefully, fine and strong.”

But the sun rode high in the cloudless sky ;

The burden and heat of the day she bore
And hither and thither she came and went,
While the loom stood still as it stood before.

“ Ah ! life is too busy at noon,” she said ;
“ My web must wait till the eventide,
Till the common work of the day is done,
And my heart grows calm in the silence wide.”
So, one by one, the hours passed on
Till the creeping shadows had longer grown ;
Till the house was still, and the breezes slept,
And her singing birds to their nests had flown.

“ And now I will weave my web,” she said,
As she turned to her loom ere set of sun,
And laid her hand on the shining threads
To set them in order one by one.
But hand was tired, and heart was weak :
“ I am not as strong as I was,” sighed she,
“ And the pattern is blurred, and the colors rare
Are not so bright, or so fair to see !

“ I must wait, I think, till another morn ;
I must go to my rest with my work undone ;
It is growing too dark to weave !” she cried,
As lower and lower sank the sun.
She dropped the shuttle ; the loom stood still ;
The weaver slept in the twilight gray.
Dear heart ! Will she weave her beautiful web
In the golden light of a longer day ?

THE "CHRISTUS" OF THE PASSION PLAY OF
OBERAMMERGAU

How does life seem to thee? I long to look
Into thine inmost soul, and see if thou
Art even as other men! Oh, set apart
And consecrate so long to purpose high,
Canst thou take up again our common lot,
And live as we live? Canst thou buy and sell,
Stoop to small needs, and petty ministries,
Work and get gain, eat, drink, and soundly sleep,
Sin and repent, as these thy brethren do?
Unto what name less sacred answerest thou
Who hast been called the Christ of Nazareth?
Thou who hast worn the awful crown of thorns,
Hanging like Him upon the dreadful Tree,
Canst thou, uncrowned, forget thy royalty?

RABBI BENAI AH

RABBI BENAI AH at the close of day,
When the low sun athwart the level sands
Shot his long arrows, from far Eastern lands
Homeward across the desert bent his way.

Behind him trailed the lengthening caravan—
The slow, weird camels, with monotonous pace ;
Before him, lifted in the clear, far space,
From east to west the towers of his city ran !

Impatiently he scanned the darkening sky ;
Then girding in hot haste, “ What ho ! ” cried he,
“ Bring the swift steed Abdallah unto me !
As rode his Bedouin master, so will I ! ”

Soon like a bird across the waste he flew,
Nor drew his rein till at the massive gate
That guards the citadel's supremest state
He paused a moment, slowly entering through.

Then down the shadowy, moonlit streets he sped ;
The city slept ; but like a burning star,
Where his own turret-chamber rose afar,
A clear, strong light its steady radiance shed !

Into his court he rode with sudden clang.
The startled slaves bowed low, but spake no word ;
By no quick tumult was the midnight stirred,
No shouts of welcome on the night air rang !

But with slow footsteps down the turret-stairs,
With trembling lips that hardly breathed his name,
And sad, averted eyes, his fair wife came—
The lady Judith—wan with tears and prayers.

Then swift he cried out, less in wrath than fear,
“ Now, by my beard ! is this the way ye keep
My welcome home ? Go ! wake my sons from sleep,
And let their glad tongues break the silence here ! ”

“ Not so, my dear lord ! Let them rest,” she said.
“ Young eyes need slumber. But come thou with me.
I have a trouble to make known to thee
Ere I before thee can lift up my head.”

Into an inner chamber led she him,
And with her own hands brought him meat and wine,
A purple robe, and linen pure and fine.
He half forgot that her sweet eyes were dim !

“ Now for thy trouble ! ” cried he, laughing loud.
“ Hast torn thy kirtle ? Are thy pearls astray ?
What ! Tears ? My camels o'er yon desert way
Bring treasures that had made Queen Esther proud ! ”

Slowly she spake, nor in his face looked she.
“ My lord, long years ago a friend of mine
Left with me jewels, costly, rare, and fine,
Bidding me guard them carefully till he

“ Again should call for them. The other day
He sent his messenger. But I have learned
To prize them as my own ! Have I not earned
A right to keep them ? Speak, my lord, I pray ! ”

“ Strange sense of honor hath a woman's heart ! ”
The rabbi answered hotly. “ Now, good lack !

Where are the jewels? I will send them back
Ere yet the sun upon his course may start!

“Show me the jewels!” Up she rose as white
As any ghost, and mutely led the way
Into the turret-chamber whence the ray
Seen from afar had blessed the rabbi’s sight.

Then with slow, trembling hands she drew aside
The silken curtain from before the bed
Whereon, in snowy calm, their boys lay dead.
“There are the jewels, O, my lord!” she cried.

A CHILD'S THOUGHT

SOFTLY fell the twilight ;
In the glowing west
Purple splendors faded ;
Birds had gone to rest ;
All the winds were sleeping ;
One lone whip-poor-will
Made the silence deeper,
Calling from the hill.

Silently, serenely,
From his mother's knee,
In the gathering darkness,
Still as still could be,
A young child watched the shadows ;
Saw the stars come out ;
Saw the weird bats flitting
Stealthily about ;

Saw across the river
How the furnace glow,
Like a fiery pennant,
Wavered to and fro ;
Saw the tall trees standing
Black against the sky,
And the moon's pale crescent
Swinging far and high.

Deeper grew the darkness ;
Darker grew his eyes

As he gazed around him,
In a still surprise.
Then intently listening,
“What is this I hear
All the time, dear mother,
Sounding in my ear?”

“I hear nothing,” said she,
“Earth is hushed and still.”
But he hearkened, hearkened,
With an eager will,
Till at length a quick smile
O'er the child-face broke,
And a kindling lustre
In his dark eyes woke.

“Listen, listen, mother !
For I hear the sound
Of the wheels, the great wheels
That move the world around !”
Oh, ears earth has dulled not !
In your purer sphere,
Strains from ours withholden
Are you wise to hear ?

“GOD KNOWS”

WILD and dark was the winter night
When the emigrant ship went down,
But just outside of the harbor bar,
In the sight of the startled town.
The winds howled, and the sea roared,
And never a soul could sleep,
Save the little ones on their mothers' breasts,
Too young to watch and weep.

No boat could live in the angry surf,
No rope could reach the land :
There were bold, brave hearts upon the shore,
There was many a ready hand—
Women who prayed, and men who strove
When prayers and work were vain ;
For the sun rose over the awful void
And the silence of the main.

All day the watchers paced the sands,
All day they scanned the deep,
All night the booming minute-guns
Echoed from steep to steep.
“Give up thy dead, O cruel sea !”
They cried athwart the space ;
But only an infant's fragile form
Escaped from its stern embrace.

Only one little child of all
Who with the ship went down

That night when the happy babies slept
So warm in the sheltered town.
Wrapped in the glow of the morning light,
It lay on the shifting sand,
As fair as a sculptor's marble dream,
With a shell in its dimpled hand.

There were none to tell of its race or kin.
"God knoweth," the pastor said,
When the wondering children asked of him
The name of the baby dead.
And so, when they laid it away at last
In the church-yard's hushed repose,
They raised a stone at the baby's head,
With the carven words, "God knows."

THE MOUNTAIN ROAD

ONLY a glimpse of mountain road
That followed where a river flowed ;
Only a glimpse—then on we passed
Skirting the forest dim and vast.

I closed my eyes. On rushed the train
Into the dark, then out again,
Startling the song-birds as it flew
The wild ravines and gorges through.

But, heeding not the dangerous way
O'erhung by sheer cliffs, rough and gray,
I only saw, as in a dream,
The road beside the mountain stream.

No smoke curled upward in the air,
No meadow-lands stretched broad and fair ;
But towering peaks rose far and high,
Piercing the clear, untroubled sky.

Yet down the yellow, winding road
That followed where the river flowed,
I saw a long procession pass
As shadows over bending grass.

The young, the old, the sad, the gay,
Whose feet had worn that narrow way,
Since first within the dusky glade
Some Indian lover wooed his maid ;

Or silent crept from tree to tree—
Spirit of stealthy vengeance, he !
Or breathless crouched while through the brake
The wild deer stole his thirst to slake.

The barefoot school-boys rushing out,
An eager, crowding, roisterous rout ;
The sturdy lads ; the lassies gay
As bobolinks in merry May ;

The farmer whistling to his team
When first the dawn begins to gleam ;
The loaded wains that one by one
Drag slowly home at set of sun ;

Young lovers straying hand in hand
Within a fair, enchanted land ;
And many a bride with lingering feet ;
And many a matron calm and sweet ;

And many an old man bent with pain ;
And many a solemn funeral train ;
And sometimes, red against the sky,
An army's banners waving high !

All mysteries of life and death
To which the spirit answereth,
Are thine, O lonely mountain road,
That followed where the river flowed !

ENTERING IN

THE church was dim and silent
With the hush before the prayer,
Only the solemn trembling
Of the organ stirred the air ;
Without, the sweet, still sunshine ;
Within, the holy calm
Where priest and people waited
For the swelling of the psalm.

Slowly the door swung open,
And a trembling baby girl,
Brown-eyed, with brown hair falling
In many a wavy curl,
With soft cheeks flushing hotly,
Shy glances downward thrown,
And small hands clasped before her,
Stood in the aisle alone.

Stood half abashed, half frightened,
Unknowing where to go,
While like a wind-rocked flower,
Her form swayed to and fro,
And the changing color fluttered
In the little troubled face,
As from side to side she wavered
With a mute, imploring grace.

It was but for a moment ;
 What wonder that we smiled,
By such a strange, sweet picture
 From holy thoughts beguiled ?
Then up rose someone softly :
 And many an eye grew dim,
As through the tender silence
 He bore the child with him.

And I—I wondered (losing
 The sermon and the prayer)
If when sometime I enter
 The “many mansions” fair,
And stand, abashed and drooping,
 In the portal’s golden glow,
Our God will send an angel
 To show me where to go !

A FLOWER FOR THE DEAD

YOU placed this flower in her hand, you say ?
This pure, pale rose in her hand of clay ?
Could she but lift her sealèd eyes,
They would meet your own with a grieved surprise !

She has been your wife for many a year,
When clouds hung low and when skies were clear ;
At your feet she laid her life's glad spring,
And her summer's glorious blossoming.

Her whole heart went with the hand you won ;
If its warm love waned as the years went on,
If it chilled in the grasp of an icy spell,
What was the reason ? I pray you tell !

You cannot ? I can ; and beside her bier
My soul must speak and your soul must hear.
If she was not all that she might have been,
Hers was the sorrow, yours the sin.

Whose was the fault if she did not grow
Like a rose in the summer ? Do you know ?
Does a lily grow when its leaves are chilled ?
Does it bloom when its root is winter-killed ?

For a little while, when you first were wed,
Your love was like sunshine round her shed ;
Then a something crept between you two,
You led where she could not follow you.

With a man's firm tread you went and came ;
You lived for wealth, for power, for fame ;
Shut in to her woman's work and ways,
She heard the nation chant your praise.

But ah ! you had dropped her hand the while ;
What time had you for a kiss, a smile ?
You two, with the same roof overhead,
Were as far apart as the sundered dead !

You, in your manhood's strength and prime ;
She, worn and faded before her time.
'Tis a common story. This rose, you say,
You laid in her pallid hand to-day ?

When did you give her a flower before ?
Ah, well !—what matter when all is o'er ?
Yet stay a moment ; you'll wed again.
I mean no reproach ; 'tis the way of men.

But I pray you think when some fairer face
Shines like a star from her wonted place,
That love will starve if it is not fed ;
That true hearts pray for their daily bread.

THOU KNOWEST

THOU knowest, O my Father ! Why should I
Weary high heaven with restless prayers and tears?
Thou knowest all ! My heart's unuttered cry
Hath soared beyond the stars and reached Thine ears.

Thou knowest—ah, Thou knowest ! Then what need,
O, loving God, to tell Thee o'er and o'er,
And with persistent iteration plead
As one who crieth at some closed door ?

“Tease not !” we mothers to our children say—
“Our wiser love will grant whate'er is best.”
Shall we, Thy children, run to Thee alway,
Begging for this and that in wild unrest ?

I dare not clamor at the heavenly gate,
Lest I should lose the high, sweet strains within ;
O, Love Divine ! I can but stand and wait
Till Perfect Wisdom bids me enter in !

WINTER

O MY roses, lying underneath the snow !
Do you still remember summer's warmth and glōw ?
Do you thrill, remembering how your blushes burned
When the Day-god on you ardent glances turned ?

Great tree, wildly stretching bare arms up to heaven,
Do you think how softly, on some warm June even,
All your young leaves whispered, all your birds sang low,
As with rhythmic motion boughs swayed to and fro ?

River, lying whitely in a frozen sleep,
Know you how your pulses used to throb and leap ?
How you danced and sparkled on your happy way,
In the summer mornings when the world was gay ?

Dear Earth, dumbly waiting God's appointed time,
Are you faint with longing for the voice sublime ?
Wrapped in stony silence, does your great heart beat,
Listening in the darkness for the coming of His feet ?

FIVE

“ BUT a week is so long ! ” he said,
With a toss of his curly head.
“ One, two, three, four, five, six, seven !—
Seven whole days ! Why, in six you know
(You said it yourself—you told me so)
The great GOD up in heaven
Made all the earth and the seas and skies,
The trees and the birds and the butterflies !
How can I wait for my seeds to grow ! ”

“ But a month is so long ! ” he said,
With a droop of his boyish head.
“ Hear me count—one, two, three, four—
Four whole weeks, and three days more ;
Thirty-one days, and each will creep
As the shadows crawl over yonder steep.
Thirty-one nights, and I shall lie
Watching the stars climb up the sky !
How can I wait till a month is o’er ? ”

“ But a year is so long ! ” he said,
Uplifting his bright young head.
“ All the seasons must come and go
Over the hills with footsteps slow—
Autumn and winter, summer and spring ;
Oh, for a bridge of gold to fling
Over the chasm deep and wide,

That I might cross to the other side,
Where she is waiting—my love, my bride !”

“ Ten years may be long,” he said,
Slow raising his stately head,
“ But there’s much to win, there is much to lose ;
A man must labor, a man must choose,
And he must be strong to wait !
The years may be long, but who would wear
The crown of honor, must do and dare !
No time has he to toy with fate
Who would climb to manhood’s high estate !”

“ Ah ! life is not long !” he said,
Bowing his grand white head.
“ One, two, three, four, five, six, seven !
Seven times ten are seventy.
Seventy years ! as swift their flight
As swallows cleaving the morning light,
Or golden gleams at even.
Life is short as a summer night—
How long, O GOD ! is eternity ?”

UNSOLVED

'Tis the old unanswered question ! Since the stars together
sung,
In the glory of the morning, when the earth was fair and
young,

Man hath asked it o'er and over, of the heavens so far and
high,
And from out the mystic silence never voice hath made
reply !

Yet again to-night I ask it, though I know, O friend of mine,
There will come, to all my asking, never answering voice of
thine.

Ah ! how many times the grasses have grown green above
thy grave,
And how many times above it have we heard the cold winds
rave !

Thou hast solved the eternal problem that the ages hold
in fee ;
Thou dost know what we but dream of ; where we marvel,
thou dost see.

What is truth, and what is fable ; what the prophets saw
who trod
In their rapt, ecstatic visions up the holy mount of God !

Not of these high themes I question—but, O friend, I fain
would know
How beyond the silent river all the long years come and go !

Where they are, our well-belovèd, who have vanished from
our sight,
As the stars fade out of heaven at the dawning of the light ;

How they live and how they love there, in the “ somewhere ”
of our dreams ;
In the “ city lying four-square ” by the everlasting streams !

Oh, the mystery of being ! Which is better, life or death ?
Thou hast tried them both, O comrade, yet thy voice ne’er
answereth !

Hast thou grown as grow the angels ? Doth thy spirit still
aspire
As the flame that soareth upward, mounting higher still, and
higher ?

In the flush of early manhood all thy earthly days were
done ;
Short thy struggle and endeavor ere the peace of heaven was
won.

But for us who stayed behind thee—oh ! our hands are worn
with toil,
And upon our souls, it may be, are the stains of earthly
moil.

Hast thou kept the lofty beauty and the glory of thy
youth ?
Dost thou see our temples whitening, smiling softly in thy
ruth ?

But for us who bear the burdens that you dropped so long ago,

All the cares you have forgotten, and the pains you missed, we know.

Yet—the question still remaineth ! Which is better, death or life ?

The not doing, or the doing ? Joy of calm, or joy of strife ?

Which is better—to be saved from temptation and from sin, Or to wrestle with the dragon and the glorious fight to win ?

Ah ! we know not, but God knoweth ! All resolves itself to this—

That He gave to us the warfare, and to thee the heavenly bliss.

It was best for thee to go hence in the morning of the day ; Till the evening shadows lengthen it is best for us to stay !

QUIETNESS

I WOULD be quiet, Lord,
Nor tease, nor fret ;
Not one small need of mine
Wilt Thou forget.

I am not wise to know
What most I need ;
I dare not cry too loud
Lest Thou shouldst heed :

Lest Thou at length shouldst say,
“ Child, have thy will ;
As thou hast chosen, lo !
Thy cup I fill ! ”

What I most crave, perchance
Thou wilt withhold,
As we from hands unmeet
Keep pearls, or gold ;

As we, when childish hands
Would play with fire,
Withhold the burning coal
Of their desire.

Yet choose Thou for me—Thou
Who knowest best ;
This one short prayer of mine
Holds all the rest !

THE DIFFERENCE

ONLY a week ago and thou wert here !

I touched thy hand, I saw thy dear, dark eyes,
I kissed thy tender lips, I felt thee near,
I spake, and listened to thy low replies.

To-day what leagues between us ! Hill and vale,
The rolling prairies and the mighty seas ;
Gray forest reaches where the wild winds wail,
And mountain crests uplifted to the breeze !

So far thou art, who wert of late so near !
The stars we watched have changed not in the skies ;
Still do thy hyacinth bells their beauty wear,
Yet half a continent between us lies !

But swift as thought along the “ singing wires ”
There flies a message like a bright-winged bird—
“ All’s well ! All’s well ! ” and ne’er from woodland choirs
By gladder music hath the air been stirred !

.

But thou, O thou, who but a week ago
Passed calmly out beyond our yearning gaze,
As some grand ship, all solemnly and slow,
Sails out of sight beyond the gathering haze—

Oh, where art *thou* ? In what far distant realm,
What star in yon resplendent fields of light,

On what fair isle that no rude seas may whelm,
Dost thou, O brother, find thy home to-night ?

Or art thou near us ? There are those who say
That but a breath divides our world from thine ;
A little cloud that may be blown away—
A gossamer veil than spider's web more fine.

Dost thou, a shadowy presence, linger near
The happy paths that thou wert wont to tread,
Where woods were still, and shining brooks ran clear,
And waving boughs arched greenly overhead ?

Oh ! be thou far or near, it is the same !
From thee there floats no message thro' the air ;
No glad " All's well " comes to us in thy name
That we the joy of thy new life may share !

MY BIRTHDAY

My birthday !—" How many years ago ?
Twenty or thirty ? " Don't ask me !
" Forty or fifty ? "—How can I tell ?
I do not remember my birth, you see !

It is hearsay evidence—nothing more !
Once on a time, the legends say,
A girl was born—and that girl was I.
How can I vouch for the truth, I pray ?

I know I am here, but when I came
Let some one wiser than I am tell !
Did this sweet flower you plucked for me
Know when its bud began to swell ?

How old am I ? You ought to know
Without any telling of mine, my dear !
For when I came to this happy earth
Were you not waiting for me here ?

A dark-eyed boy on the northern hills,
Chasing the hours with flying feet,
Did you not know your wife was born,
By a subtile prescience, faint yet sweet ?

Did never a breath from the south-land come,
With sunshine laden and rare perfume,
To lift your hair with a soft caress,
And waken your heart to richer bloom ?

Not one ? O mystery strange as life !
To think that we who are now so dear
Were once in our dreams so far apart,
Nor cared if the other were far or near !

But—how old am I ? You must tell.
Just as old as I seem to you !
Nor shall I a day older be
While life remaineth and love is true !

A RED ROSE

O ROSE, my red, red Rose,
Where has thy beauty fled ?
Low in the west is a sea of fire,
But the great white moon soars high and higher,
As my garden walks I tread.

Thy white rose-sisters gleam
Like stars in the darkening sky ;
They bend their brows with a sudden thrill
To the kiss of the night-dews soft and still,
When the warm south wind floats by.

And the stately lilies stand
Fair in the silvery light,
Like saintly vestals, pale in prayer ;
Their pure breath sanctifies the air,
As its fragrance fills the night.

But O, my red, red Rose !
My Rose with the crimson lips !
So bright thou wert in the sunny morn,
Yet now thou art hiding all forlorn,
And thy soul is in drear eclipse !

Dost thou mourn thy lover dead—
Thy lover, the lordly Sun ?
Didst thou see him sink in the glowing west
With pomp of banners above his rest ?
He shall rise again, sweet one !

He shall rise with his eye of fire—
And thy passionate heart shall beat,
And thy radiant blushes burn again,
With the joy of rapture after pain
At the coming of his feet !

TWENTY-ONE

GROWN to man's stature ! O my little child !
My bird that sought the skies so long ago !
My fair, sweet blossom, pure and undefiled,
How have the years flown since we laid thee low !

What have they been to thee ? If thou wert here
Standing beside thy brothers, tall and fair,
With bearded lip, and dark eyes shining clear,
And glints of summer sunshine in thy hair,

I should look up into thy face and say,
Wavering, perhaps, between a tear and smile,
"O my sweet son, thou art a man to-day !" —
And thou wouldst stoop to kiss my lips the while.

But—up in heaven—how is it with thee, dear ?
Art thou a man—to man's full stature grown ?
Dost thou count time as we do, year by year ?
And what of all earth's changes hast thou known ?

Thou hadst not learned to love me. Didst thou take
Any small germ of love to heaven with thee,
That thou hast watched and nurtured for my sake,
Waiting till I its perfect flower may see ?

What is it to have lived in heaven always ?
To have no memory of pain or sin ?
Ne'er to have known in all the calm, bright days,
The jar and fret of earth's discordant din ?

Thy brothers—they are mortal—they must tread
Ofttimes in rough, hard ways, with bleeding feet ;
Must fight with dragons, must bewail their dead,
And fierce Apollyon face to face must meet.

I, who would give my very life for theirs,
I cannot save them from earth's pain or loss ;
I cannot shield them from its griefs or cares ;
Each human heart must bear alone its cross !

Was God, then, kinder unto thee than them,
O thou whose little life was but a span ?—
Ah, think it not ! In all his diadem
No star shines brighter than the kingly man,

Who nobly earns whatever crown he wears,
Who grandly conquers, or as grandly dies ;
And the white banner of his manhood bears,
Through all the years uplifted to the skies !

What lofty pæans shall the victor greet !
What crown resplendent for his brow be fit !
O child, if earthly life be bitter-sweet,
Hast thou not something missed in missing it ?

SINGING IN THE DARK

O YE little warblers, flying fast and far
From the balmy south-land, where the roses are,
Robins red and blue-birds, do ye faint to see
How the chill snow-blossoms whiten shrub and tree ?

Through the snowy valley cold the north winds sweep ;
Mother earth, half-wakened, turns again to sleep ;
Silent lies the river in an icy trance,
And the frozen meadows wait the sun's hot glance.

Dull and gray the skies are. Soft and blue were those
That so late above you bent at daylight's close ;
Do ye grieve, remembering all the balm and bloom,
All the warmth and sweetness of the starlit gloom ?

Do ye sadly wonder what strange impulse drew
All your flashing pinions the far ether through ?
Do ye count it madness that so wide ye strayed
From the starry jasmine and the orange shade ?

Yet this morn I heard ye singing in the dark,
Songs of such rare sweetness that the world might hark !
O ye blessed minstrels, silent not for pain,
God is in the heavens, and your sun shall shine again !

THOMAS MOORE

MAY 28, 1779-1879

HUSH ! O be ye silent, all ye birds of May !
Cease the high, clear trilling of your roundelay !
Be the merry minstrels mute in vale, on hill,
And in every tree-top let the song be still !

O ye winds, breathe softly ! Let your voices die
In a low, faint whisper, sweet as love's first sigh ;
O ye zephyrs, blowing over beds of flowers,
Be ye still as dews are in the starry hours !

O ye laughing waters, leaping here and there,
Filling with sweet clamor all the summer air,
Can ye not be quiet ? Hush, ye mountain streams,
Dancing to glad music from the world of dreams !

And thou, mighty ocean, beating on the shore,
Bid thy angry billows stay their thunderous roar !
O ye waves, lapse softly, in such slumberous calm
As ye know when circling isles of crested palm !

Bells in tower and steeple, be ye mute to-day
As the bell-flowers rocking in the winds of May !
Cease awhile, ye minstrels, though your notes be clear
As the strains that soar in heaven's high atmosphere !

Earth, bid all thy children hearken—for a voice,
Sweeter than a seraph's, bids their hearts rejoice ;

Floating down the silence of a hundred years,
Lo ! its deathless music thrills our listening ears !

'Tis the voice our fathers loved so long ago,
Songs to which they listened warbling clear and low ;
Hark, " Ye Disconsolate ! " while the minstrel pure
Sings—" Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure !

Sings of love's wild rapture triumphing o'er pain,
Glorying in giving, counting loss but gain ;
Sings the warrior's passion and the patriot's pride,
And the brave, unshrinking, who for glory died—

Sings of Erin smiling through a mist of tears ;
Of her patient waiting all the weary years ;
Sings the pain of parting, and the joy divine
When the bliss of meeting stirs the heart like wine ;

Sings of memories waking in " the stilly night ; "
Of the " young dreams " fading in the morning light ;
Of the " rose of summer " perishing too soon ;
Of the early splendors waning ere the noon !

O thou tender singer ! All the air to-day
Trembles with the burden of thy " farewell " lay ;
Crowns and thrones may crumble, into darkness hurled,
Yet is song immortal ; song shall rule the world !

A LAST WORD

WHERE will it go to reach thine ears
My father, thou dost wear
Somewhere beyond the stars to-night
Thy crown of silver hair.

Somewhere thou *art*. No wandering ghost
In vast, vague realms of space—
But thine own self, majestic, fair,
In thine appointed place.

By one long look thy soul replied
When last I cried to thee,
As thou wert drifting out of sight
Upon the unknown sea ;

And well I know that thou wouldst turn
Even from joys divine,
If but thy listening ears could hear
One faltering word of mine.

Yet, knowing this, I cannot lay
My book upon thy knee,
Saying, " O father, once again
I bring my sheaves to thee ! "

SONNETS

THE SONNET

I. TO A CRITIC

“It is but cunning artifice,” you say ?
“To it no throb of nature answereth ?
It hath no living pulse, no vital breath,
This puppet, fashioned in an elder day,
Through whose strait lips no heart can cry or pray ? ”
O deaf and blind of soul, these words that saith !
If that thine ear is dull, what hindereth
That quicker ears should hear the bugles play
And the trump call to battle ? Since the stars
First sang together, and the exulting skies
Thrilled to their music, earth hath never heard,
Above the tumult of her worldly jars,
Or loftier songs or prayers than those that rise
Where the high sonnet soareth like a bird !

II. TO A POET

Thou who wouldst wake the sonnet's silver lyre,
Make thine hands clean ! Then, as on eagles' wings,
Above the soiling touch of sordid things,
Bid thy soul soar till, mounting high and higher,
It feels the glow of pure celestial fire,
Bathes in clear light, and hears the song that rings
Through heaven's high arches when some angel brings
Gifts to the Throne, on wings that never tire !

It hath a subtile music, strangely sweet,
Yet all unmeet for dance or roundelay,
Or idle love that fadeth like a flower.
It is the voice of hearts that strongly beat,
The cry of souls that grandly love and pray,
The trumpet-peal that thrills the battle-hour !

AT REST

“ ‘ WHEN Greek meets Greek,’ you know,” he sadly said,
“ ‘ Then comes the tug of war.’ I deem him great,
And own him wise and good. Yet adverse fate
Hath made us enemies. If I were dead,
And buried deep with grave-mould on my head,
I still believe that, came he soon or late
Where I was lying in my last estate,
My dust would quiver at his lightest tread !”
The slow years passed ; and one fair summer night,
When the low sun was reddening all the west,
I saw two grave-mounds, where the grass was bright,
Lying so near each other that the crest
Of the same wave touched each with amber light.
But, ah, dear hearts ! how undisturbed their rest !

TOO WIDE!

O MIGHTY Earth, thou art too wide, to wide !
Too vast thy continents, too broad thy seas,
Too far thy prairies stretching fair as these
Now reddening in the sunset's crimson tide !
Sundered by thee how have thy children cried
Each to some other, until every breeze
Has borne a burden of fond messages
That all unheard in thy lone wastes have died !
Draw closer, O dear Earth, thy hills that soar
Up to blue skies such countless leagues apart !
Bid thou thine awful spaces smaller grow !
Compass thy billows with a narrower shore,
That yearning lips may meet, heart beat to heart,
And parted souls forget their lonely woe !

MERCÉDÈS

(June 27, 1878)

O FAIR young queen, who liest dead to-day
In thy proud palace o'er the moaning sea,
With still, white hands that never more may be
Lifted to pluck life's roses bright with May—
Little is it to you that, far away,
Where skies you knew not bend above the free,
Hearts touched with tender pity turn to thee,
And for thy sake a shadow dims the day!
But youth and love and womanhood are one,
Though across sundering seas their signals fly;
Young Love's pure kiss, the joy but just begun,
The hope of motherhood, thy people's cry—
O thou fair child! was it not hard to die
And leave so much beneath the summer sun?

GRASS-GROWN

GRASS grows at last above all graves, you say ?

Why, therein lies the sharpest sting of all !

To think that stars will rise and dews will fall,
Hills flush with purple splendor, soft winds play
Where roses bloom and violets of May,

Robin to robin in the tree-tops call,

And all sweet sights and sounds the senses thrall,
Just as they did before that strange, sad day !

Does that bring comfort ? Are we glad to know
That our eyes sometime must forget to weep,

Even as June forgets December's snow ?
Over the graves where our beloved sleep,

We charge thee, Time, let not the green grass grow,
Nor your relentless mosses coldly creep !

TO ZÜLMA

I.

SOMETIMES my heart grows faint with longing, dear—

Longing to see thy face, to touch thy hand.

But mountains rise between us ; leagues of land
Stretch on and on where mighty lakes lie clear
In the far spaces, and great forests rear

Their sombre crowns on many a lonely strand !

Yet, O my fair child, canst thou understand,
Thou whose dear place was once beside me here,
How yet I dare not pray that thou and I

Again may dwell together as of old ?

There is a gate between us, locked and barred,
Over which we may not climb ; and standing nigh

Is the white angel Sorrow, who doth hold

The only key that may unlock its ward !

II.

Yet think not I would have it otherwise !

Our God, who knoweth women's hearts, knows best—

And every little bird must build its nest
From whence it soareth, singing, to the skies.
What though the one that thou hast builded lies

Where sinks the sun to its enchanted rest,

If, on each breeze that bloweth east or west,
To thee, on swiftest wing, my spirit flies ?
We are not far apart, and ne'er shall be !

For Love, like God, knoweth not time, nor space,
And it is freer than the viewless air ;
And well I know, belovèd, that if we
Trode different planets in yon starry space
We should reach out, and find each other there !

SLEEP

WHO calls thee "gentle Sleep?" O! rare coquette,
Who comest crowned with poppies, thou shouldst wear
Nettles instead, or thistles, in thine hair;
For thou 'rt the veriest elf that ever yet
Made weary mortals sigh and toss and fret!
Thou dost float softly through the drowsy air
Hovering as if to kiss my lips and share
My restless pillow; but ere I can set
My arms to clasp thee, without sign or speech,
Save one swift, mocking smile thou 'rt out of reach!
Yet, sometime, thou, or one as like to thee
As sister is to sister, shalt draw near
With such soft lullabies for my dull ear,
That neither life nor love shall waken me!

IN KING'S CHAPEL

(BOSTON, November 3, 1878)

O, LORD OF HOSTS, how sacred is this place,
Where, though the tides of time resistless flow,
And the long generations come and go,
Thou still abidest ! In this holy space
The very airs are hushed before Thy face,
And wait in reverent calm, as voices low
Blend in the prayers and chantings, soft and slow,
And the gray twilight stealeth on apace.
Hark ! There are whispers from the time-worn walls ;
The mighty dead glide up the shadowy aisle ;
And there are rustlings as of angels' wings
While from the choir the heavenly music falls !
Well may we bow in grateful praise the while—
In the King's Chapel reigns the King of Kings !

TO-DAY

WHAT dost thou bring to me, O fair To-day,
That comest o'er the mountains with swift feet ?
All the young birds make haste thy steps to greet,
And all the dewy roses of the May

Turn red and white with joy. The breezes play
On their soft harps a welcome low and sweet ;
All nature hails thee, glad thy face to meet,
And owns thy presence in a brighter ray.

But my poor soul distrusts thee ! One as fair

As thou art, O To-day, drew near to me,
Serene and smiling, yet she bade me wear
The sudden sackcloth of a great despair !

O, pitiless ! that through the wandering air
Sent no kind warning of the ill to be !

F. A. F.

WHEN upon eyes long dim, to whom the light
Of sun and stars had unfamiliar grown—
Eyes that so long in deepening shades had known
The mystic visions of the inner sight—
Day broke, at last, after the weary night,
I cannot think its sudden glory shone
In pitiless brightness, dazzling, clear, and white—
A piercing splendor on the darkness thrown !
Softly as moonlight steals upon the skies,
Slowly as shadows creep at set of sun,
Gently as falls a mother's tender kiss,
So softly stole the light upon his eyes ;
So slowly passed the shadows one by one ;
So gently dawned the morning of his bliss !

DAY AND NIGHT

I.

WHEN I awake at morn, refreshed, renewed,
Glad with the gladness of the jocund day
And jubilant with all the birds of May,
My spirit shrinks from Night's dull quietude.
With it and Sleep I have a deadly feud.
I hear the young winds in the maples play,
The river singing on its happy way,
The swallows twittering to their callow brood.
The fresh, fair earth is full of joyous life ;
The tree-tops toss in billowy unrest ;
The very mountain shadows are astir !
With eager heart I thrill to join the strife ;
Doing, not dreaming, to my soul seems best,
And I am lordly Day's true worshipper !

II.

But when with Day's long weariness oppressed,
With folded hands I watch the sun go down,
Lighting far torches in the steepled town,
And kindling all the glowing, reddening west ;
When every sleepy bird has sought its nest ;
When the long shadows from the hills are thrown,
And Night's soft airs about the world are blown,
Thou heart of mine, how sweet it is to rest !
O, Israfil ! Thou of the tuneful voice !

It will be nightfall when thy voice I hear,
 Summoning me to slumber soft and low !
Day will be done. Then will I not rejoice
That all my tasks are o'er and rest is near,
And, like a tired child, be glad to go ?

THY NAME

WHAT matters it what men may call Thee, Thou,
The Eternal One, who reign'st supreme, alone,
The boundless universe Thy mighty throne ?
When souls before Thee reverently bow,
Oh, carest Thou what name the lips breathe low
Jove, or Osiris, or the God Unknown
To whom the Athenians raised their altar stone,
Or Thine, O Holiest, unto whom we vow ?
The sun hath many names in many lands ;
Yet upon all its golden splendors fall,
Where'er, from age to age entreating still,
The adoring earth uplifts its waiting hands.
Love knows all names and answereth to all—
Who worships Thee may call Thee what he will !

RESURGAMUS

WHAT though we sleep a thousand leagues apart,
I by my mountains, you beside your sea ?
What though our moss-grown graves divided be
By the wide reaches of a continent's heart ?
When from long slumber we at length shall start
Wakened to stronger life, exultant, free,
This mortal clothed in immortality,
Where shall I find my heaven save where thou art ?
Straight as a bird that hasteth to its nest,
Glad as an eagle soaring to the light,
Swift as the thought that bears my soul to thine
When yon lone star hangs trembling in the west,
So straight, so glad, so swift to thee my flight,
Led on through farthest space by love divine !

AT THE TOMB

O SOUL ! rememberest thou how Mary went
In the gray dawn to weep beside the tomb
Where one she loved lay buried ? Through the gloom,
Pallid with pain, and with long anguish spent,
Still pressed she on with solemn, high intent,
Bearing her costly gifts of rare perfume
And spices odorous with eastern bloom,
Unto the Master's sepulchre ! But rent
Was the great stone from its low door away ;
And when she stooped to peer with startled eyes
Into the dark where slept the pallid clay,
Lo, it was gone ! And there in heavenly guise,
So grandly calm, so fair in morn's first ray,
She found an angel from the upper skies !

THREE DAYS

I.

WHAT shall I bring to lay upon thy bier
O Yesterday ! thou day forever dead ?
With what strange garlands shall I crown thy head,
Thou silent One ? For rose and rue are near
Which thou thyself didst bring me ; heart's-ease clear
And dark in purple opulence that shed
Rare odors round ; wormwood, and herbs that fed
My soul with bitterness—they all are here !
When to the banquet I was called by thee
Thou gavest me rags and royal robes to wear ;
Honey and aloes mingled in the cup
Of costly wine that thou didst pour for me ;
Thy throne, thy footstool, thou didst bid me share ;
On crusts and heavenly manna bade me sup !

II.

Thou art no dreamer, O thou stern To-day !
The dead past had its dreams ; the real is thine.
An armored knight, in panoply divine,
It is not thine to loiter by the way,
Though all the meads with summer flowers be gay,
Though birds sing for thee, and though fair stars shine,
And every god pours for thee life's best wine !
Nor friend nor foe hath strength to bid thee stay.

Gleaming beneath thy brows with smouldering fire
Thine eyes look out upon the eternal hills
As forth thou ridest with thy spear in rest.
From the far heights a voice cries, "Come up higher!"
And in swift answer all thy being thrills,
When lo! 'tis night—thy sun is in the west!

III.

But thou, To-morrow! never yet was born
In earth's dull atmosphere a thing so fair—
Never yet tripped, with footsteps light as air,
So glad a vision o'er the hills of morn!
Fresh as the radiant dawning—all unworn
By lightest touch of sorrow, or of care,
Thou dost the glory of the morning share
By snowy wings of hope and faith upborne!
O fair To-morrow! what our souls have missed
Art thou not keeping for us, somewhere, still?
The buds of promise that have never blown—
The tender lips that we have never kissed—
The song whose high, sweet strain eludes our skill—
The one white pearl that life hath never known!

DARKNESS

COME, blessed Darkness, come, and bring thy balm
For eyes grown weary of the garish Day !

Come with thy soft, slow steps, thy garments gray,
Thy veiling shadows, bearing in thy palm
The poppy-seeds of slumber, deep and calm !

Come with thy patient stars, whose far-off ray
Steals the hot fever of the soul away,
Thy stillness, sweeter than a chanted psalm !

O blessed Darkness, Day indeed is fair,

And Light is dear when summer days are long,
And one by one the harvesters go by ;
But so is rest sweet, and surcease from care,

And folded palms, and hush of evensong,
And all the unfathomed silence of the sky !

SILENCE

O GOLDEN Silence, bid our souls be still,
And on the foolish fretting of our care
Lay thy soft touch of healing unaware !
Once, for a half hour, even in heaven the thrill
Of the clear harpings ceased the air to fill
With soft reverberations. Thou wert there,
And all the shining seraphs owned thee fair—
A white, hushed Presence on the heavenly hill.
Bring us thy peace, O Silence ! Song is sweet ;
Tuneful is baby laughter, and the low
Murmur of dying winds among the trees,
And dear the music of Love's hurrying feet ;
Yet only he who knows thee learns to know
The secret soul of loftiest harmonies.

SANCTIFIED

A HOLY presence hath been here, and, lo,
The place is sanctified ! From off thy feet
Put thou thy shoes, my soul ! The air is sweet
Even yet with heavenly odors, and I know
If thou dost listen, thou wilt hear the flow
Of most celestial music, and the beat
Of rhythmic pinions. It is then most meet
That thou shouldst watch and wait, lest to and fro
Should pass the heavenly messengers and thou,
Haply, shouldst miss their coming. O my soul,
Count this fair room a temple from whose shrine,
Led by an angel, though we know not how,
Thy friend and lover dropped the cup of dole,
And passed from thy love to the Love Divine !

A MESSAGE

I BID thee sing the song I would have sung—
The high, pure strain that since my soul was born,
Clearer and sweeter than the bells of morn,
Through all its chambers hath divinely rung !
In thee let my whole being find a tongue ;
Pluck thou the rose where I have plucked the thorn,
Nor leave the perfect flower to fade forlorn.
Youth holds the world in fee—and thou art young !
O my glad singer of the tuneful voice,
Where my wing falters be thou strong to soar,
Striking the deep, clear notes beyond my reach,
Beyond the plummet of a woman's speech.
Sing my songs for me, and from some far shore
My happy soul shall hear thee and rejoice !

WHEN LESSER LOVES

WHEN lesser loves by the relentless flow
 Of mighty currents from my arms were torn
 And swept, unheeding, to that silent bourn
Whose mystic shades no living man may know,
By night, by day, I sang my songs ; and so,
 Out of the sackcloth that my soul had worn,
 Weaving my purple, I forgot to mourn,
Pouring my grief out in melodious woe !
Now am I dumb, dear heart. My lips are mute.
 Yet if from yonder blue height thou dost lean
 Earthward, remembering love's last wordless kiss,
Know thou no trembling thrills of harp or lute,
 Dying soft wails and tender songs between,
 Were half so voiceful as this silence is !

GEORGE ELIOT

PASS on, O world, and leave her to her rest !
 Brothers, be silent while the drifting snow
 Weaves its white pall above her, lying low
With empty hands crossed idly on her breast.
O sisters, let her sleep ! while unrepressed
 Your pitying tears fall silently and slow,
 Washing her spotless, in their crystal flow,
Of that one stain whereof she stands confessed.
Are we so pure that we should scoff at her,
 Or mock her now, low lying in her tomb ?
 God knows how sharp the thorn her roses wore,
Even what time their petals were astir
 In the warm sunshine, odorous with perfume.
 Leave her to Him who weighed the cross she bore !

KNOWING

ONE summer day, to a young child I said,
 “ Write to thy mother, boy.” With earnest face,
 And laboring fingers all unused to trace
The mystic characters, he bent his head
(That should have danced amid the flowers instead)
 Over the blurred page for a half-hour’s space ;
 Then with a sigh that burdened all the place
Cried, “ Mamma knows ! ” and out to sunshine sped.
O soul of mine, when tasks are hard and long,
 And life so crowds thee with its stress and strain
 That thou, half fainting, art too tired to pray,
Drink thou this wine of blessing and be strong !
 God knows ! What though the lips be dumb with pain,
 Or the pen drops ? He knows what thou wouldst say.

A THOUGHT

(SUGGESTED BY READING "A MIRACLE IN STONE")

OH, thou supreme, all-wise, eternal One,
Thou who art Lord of lords, and King of kings,
In whose high praise each flaming seraph sings ;
Thou at whose word the morning stars begun
With song and shout their glorious course to run ;
Thou unto whom the great sea lifts its wings,
And earth, with laden hands, rich tribute brings
From every shore that smiles beneath the sun ;
Thou who didst write thy name upon the hills
And bid the mountains speak for thee alway,
Yet gave sweet messages to murmuring rills,
And to each flower that breathes its life away—
Oh! dost thou smile, or frown, when man's conceit
Seeks in this pile of stone the impress of thy feet ?

TO-MORROW

I.

MYSTERIOUS One, inscrutable, unknown,
A silent Presence, with averted face
Whose lineaments no mortal eye can trace,
And robes of trailing darkness round thee thrown,
Over the midnight hills thou comest alone !
What thou dost bring to me from farthest space,
What blessing or what ban, what dole, what grace,
I may not know. Thy secrets are thine own !
Yet, asking not for lightest word or sign
To tell me what the hidden fate may be,
Without a murmur, or a quickened breath,
Unshrinkingly I place my hand in thine,
And through the shadowy depths go forth with thee
To meet, as thou shalt lead, or life, or death !

II.

Then, if I fear not thee, thou veiled One
Whose face I know not, why fear I to meet
Beyond the everlasting hills her feet
Who cometh when all Yesterdays are done ?
Shall I, who have proved thee good, thy sister shun ?
O thou To-morrow, who dost feel the beat
Of life's long, rhythmic pulses, strong and sweet,
In the far realm that hath no need of sun—

Thou who art fairer than the fair To-day
That I have held so dear, and loved so much—
When, slow descending from the hills divine,
Thou summonest me to join thee on thy way,
Let me not shrink nor tremble at thy touch,
Nor fear to break thy bread and drink thy wine!

“O EARTH! ART THOU NOT WEARY?”

O EARTH! art thou not weary of thy graves?

Dear, patient mother Earth, upon thy breast

How are they heaped from farthest east to west!

From the dim north, where the wild storm-wind raves

O'er the cold surge that chills the shore it laves,

To sunlit isles by softest seas caressed,

Where roses bloom alway and song-birds nest,

How thick they lie—like flecks upon the waves!

There is no mountain-top so far and high,

No desert so remote, no vale so deep,

No spot by man so long untenanted,

But the pale moon, slow marching up the sky,

Sees over some lone grave the shadows creep!

O Earth! art thou not weary of thy dead?

ALEXANDER

THERE was a man whom all men called The Great.

Low lying on his death-bed, we are told,

He bade his courtiers (when he should be cold,
Breathless, and silent in his last estate,

And they who were to bury him should wait

Outside the palace) that no cerecloth's fold

Or winding-sheet should round his hands be rolled :

Those helpless hands that once had ruled the state !

Thus spake he : " On the black pall let them lie,

Empty and lorn, that all the world may see

How of his riches there was nothing left

To Alexander when he came to die."

Lord of two worlds, as treasureless was he

As any beggar of his crust bereft !

THE PLACE

“I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU”

I.

O HOLY Place, we know not where thou art !
Though one by one our well-beloved dead
From our close claspings to thy bliss have fled,
They send no word back to the breaking heart ;
And if, perchance, their angels fly athwart
The silent reaches of the abyss wide-spread,
The swift white-wings we see not, but instead
Only the dark void keeping us apart.
Where did he set thee, O thou Holy Place ?
Made he a new world in the heavens high hung,
So far from this poor earth that even yet
Its first glad rays have traversed not the space
That lies between us, nor their glory flung
On the old home its sons can ne'er forget ?

II.

But what if on some fair, auspicious night,
Like that on which the shepherds watched of old,
Down from far skies, in burning splendor rolled,
Shall stream the radiance of a star more bright
Than ever yet hath shone on mortal sight—
Swift shafts of light, like javelins of gold,

Wave after wave of glory manifold,
From zone to zenith flooding all the height ?
And what if, moved by some strange inner sense,
Some instinct, than pure reason wiser far,
Some swift clairvoyance that annulleth space,
All men shall cry, with sudden joy intense,
“Behold, behold this new resplendent star—
Our heaven at last revealed!—the Place! the
Place!”

III.

Then shall the heavenly host with one accord
Veil their bright faces in obeisance meet,
While swift they haste the Glorious One to greet.
Then shall Orion own at last his Lord,
And from his belt unloose the blazing sword,
While pale proud Ashtaroth with footsteps fleet,
Her jewelled crown drops humbly at his feet,
And Lyra strikes her harp's most rapturous chord.
O Earth, bid all your lonely isles rejoice !
Break into singing, all ye silent hills ;
And ye, tumultuous seas, make quick reply !
Let the remotest desert find a voice !
The whole creation to its centre thrills,
For the new light of Heaven is in the sky !

TO A GODDESS

LIFT up thy torch, O Goddess, grand and fair !
Let its light stream across the waiting seas
As banners float upon the yielding breeze
From the king's tent, his presence to declare.
And as his heralds haste to do their share,
Shouting his praise and sounding his decrees,
So let the waves in loftiest symphonies
Proclaim thy glory to the listening air !
Thou star-crowned one, the nations watch for thee,
For thee the patient earth has waited long—
To thee her toiling millions stretch their hands
From the far hills and o'er the rolling sea.
Lift up thy torch, O beautiful and strong,
A beacon-light to earth's remotest lands.

O. W. H.

(August 29, 1809.)

“ How shall I crown this child ? ” fair Summer cried.
“ May wasted all her violets long ago ;
No longer on the hills June’s roses glow,
Flushing with tender bloom the pastures wide.
My stately lilies one by one have died :
The clematis is but a ghost—and lo !
In the fair meadow-lands no daisies blow ;
How shall I crown this Summer child ? ” she sighed.
Then quickly smiled. “ For him, for him,” she said,
“ On every hill my golden-rod shall flame,
Token of all my prescient soul foretells.
His shall be golden song and golden fame—
Long golden years with love and honor wed—
And crowns, at last, of silver immortelles ! ”

GIFTS FOR THE KING

(H. W. L., February 27th)

WHAT good gifts can we bring to thee, O King,
O royal poet, on this day of days ?
No golden crown, for thou art crowned with bays ;
No jewelled sceptre, and no signet ring,
O'er distant realms far-flashing rays to fling ;
For well we know thy beckoning finger sways
A mightier empire, and the world obeys.
No lute, for thou hast only need to sing ;
No rare perfumes, for thy pure life makes sweet
The air about thee, even as when the rose
Swings its bright censer down the garden-path.
Love drops its fragrant lilies at thy feet ;
Fame breathes thy name to each sweet wind that blows.
What can we bring to him who all things hath ?

RECOGNITION

(H. W. L.)

I.

WHO was the first to bid thee glad all-hail,
O friend and master ? Who with wingèd feet
Over the heavenly hills flew, fast and fleet,
To bring thee welcome from beyond the veil ?
The mighty bards of old ?—Thy Dante, pale
With high thoughts even yet, Virgil the sweet,
Old Homer, trumpet-tongued, and Chaucer, meet
To clasp thy stainless hand ? What nightingale
Of all that sing in heaven sang first to thee ?
Through all the hallelujahs didst thou hear
Spencer still pouring his melodious lays,
Majestic Milton's clarion, strong and free,
Or, golden link between the far and near,
Bryant's clear chanting of the eternal days ?

II.

Nay, but not these ! not these ! Even though apace,
Long rank on rank, with swift yet stately tread
They came to meet thee—the immortal dead—
Yet Love ran faster ! All the lofty place,
All the wide, luminous, enchanted space
Glistened with Shining Ones who thither sped—
The countless host thy song had comforted !
What light, what love illumed each radiant face !

The Rachels thou hadst sung to in the dark,
The Davids who for Absaloms had wept,
The fainting ones who drank thy balm and wine,
High souls that soared with thee as soars the lark,
Children who named thee, smiling, ere they slept—
These gave thee first the heavenly countersign !

SHAKESPEARE

(April 23, 1664-1889)

NAY, Master, dare we speak? O mighty shade,
Sitting enthroned where awful splendors are,
Beyond the light of sun, or moon, or star,
How shall we breathe thy high name undismayed?
Poet, in royal majesty arrayed,
Walking with mute gods through the realms afar—
Seer, whose wide vision time nor death can bar,
We would but kiss thy feet, abashed, afraid!
But yet we love thee, and great love is bold.
Love, O our master, with his heart of flame
And eye of fire, dares even to look on thee,
For whom the ages lift their gates of gold;
And his glad tongue shall syllable thy name
Till time is lost in God's unsounded sea!

TO E. C. S.

WITH A ROSE FROM CONWAY CASTLE

ON hoary Conway's battlemented height,
O poet-heart, I pluck for thee a rose !
Through arch and court the sweet wind wandering goes ;
Round each high tower the rooks, in airy flight,
Circle and wheel, all bathed in amber light ;
Low at my feet the winding river flows ;
Valley and town, entranced in deep repose,
War doth no more appall, nor foes affright !
Thou knowest how softly on the castle walls,
Where mosses creep, and ivys far and free
Fling forth their pennants to the freshening breeze,
Like God's own benison this sunshine falls.
Therefore, O friend, across the sundering seas
Fair Conway sends this sweet wild rose to thee !

A CHRISTMAS SONNET

I WAKE at midnight from a slumber deep.
Hark! are the clear stars singing? Sweet and low,
As from far skies, floats music's liquid flow,
Waking earth's happy children from their sleep.
Now, from the bells a myriad voices leap,
And all the brazen lilies are aglow
With rapturous heart-beats, swinging to and fro
As the glad chimes their rhythmic pulsing keep.
O soul of mine, join thou the high refrain
That rings from shore to shore, from sea to sea,
Like song of birds that do but soar and sing!
O heart of mine, what room hast thou for pain?
With love and joy make holy symphony,
And keep to-day the birthday of thy King!

POVERTY

THE city woke. Down the long market-place
Her sad eyes wandered, but no tears they shed.
In her bare home a little child lay dead ;
Yet she was here, with white, impassive face,
And hands that had no beauty and no grace,
Selling her small wares for a bit of bread !
Since they who live must eat though sore bestead,
What time had she to weep—what breathing space ?
Poor even in words, she had no fitting phrase
Wherein to tell the story of her dole,
But stood, like Niobe, a thing of stone,
Or mutely went on her accustomed ways,
Or counted her small gains, while her dumb soul,
Shut in with grief, could only make its moan !

SURPRISES

I.

O EARTH, that had so long in darkness lain,
Waiting and listening for the Voice that cried,
“Let there be light!”—on thy first eventide
What woe, what fear, wrung thy dumb soul with pain!
In darkling space down dropt the red sun, slain,
With all his banners drooping. Far and wide
Spread desolation’s vast and blackening tide.
How couldst thou know that day would dawn again?
But the long hours wore on, till lo! pale gleams
Of faint, far glory lit the eastern skies,
Broadening and reddening till the sun’s full beams
Broke in clear, golden splendor on thine eyes.
Darkness and brooding anguish were but dreams,
Lost in a trembling wonder of surprise!

II.

Even so, O Life, all tremulous with woe,
Thou too didst cower when, without sound or jar,
From the high zenith sinking fast and far,
Thy sun went out of heaven! How couldst thou know
In that dark hour, that never tide could flow
So ebon-black, nor ever mountain-bar
Breast night so deep, without or moon or star,
But that the morning yet again must glow?

God never leaves thee in relentless dark.

Slowly the dawn on unbelieving eyes
Breaketh at last. Day brightens—and, oh hark !

A flood of bird-song from the tender skies !
From storm and darkness thou hast found an ark,
Shut in with this great marvel of surprise !

C. H. R.

(LOST OFF HAI-MUN IN THE CHINA SEA)

IN what wide Wonderland, or near, or far,
Press on to-day thy swift adventurous feet—
Thou who wert wont the Orient skies to greet
With song and laughter, and to climb the bar
Of mountain ranges where the Cloud-gods are,
With brave, glad steps, as eager and as fleet
As a young lover's, who, on errand sweet,
Seeks the one face that is his guiding star?
The far blue seas engulfed thee, oh! my brother,
But could not quench thy spirit's lofty fire,
Nor daunt the soul that knew not how to quail.
Earth-quest thou didst but barter for another,
Where Alps on Alps before thee still aspire,
And where, in God's name, thou shalt yet prevail!

A NEW BEATITUDE

L. G. W.

“ A NEW beatitude I write for thee,
 ‘ *Blessed are they who are not sure of things,*
Nor strive to mount on feeble, finite wings
To heights where God’s strong angels, soaring free,
Halt and are silent.” Ah, the mystery !
 To-day, O friend, beyond earth’s reckonings
 Of time and space, beyond its jars and stings,
Thou enterest where the eternal secrets be !
Ay, thou art sure to-day ! No more the bars
 Of earth’s poor limitations hold thee back,
 Setting their bounds to thine advancing feet.
Soar, lofty soul, beyond the farthest stars,
 Where hope nor yearning e’er shall suffer lack,
Nor knowledge fail to any that entreat !

COMPENSATION

I.

LIFE of my life, do you remember how,
At our fair pleasance gate, a stately tree
Kept silent watch and ward? Majestic, free,
Its head reached heaven, while its lowest bough
Swept the green turf, and all between was row
On row of crested waves—a sleeping sea—
Or heaving billows tossed tumultuously,
When the fierce winds that smote the mountain's brow
Lashed it to sudden passion. It was old.
Storm-rocked for many centuries, it had grown
One with the hills, the river and the sod;
Yet young it was, with largess of red gold
For every autumn, and from stores unknown
Bringing each springtime treasure-trove to God.

II.

Then came a night of terror and dismay,
Uproar and lightning, with the furious sweep
Of mighty winds, that raged from steep to steep,
And ere it passed the great tree prostrate lay!
Sleepless I mourned until the morning gray;
Then forth I crept, as one who goes to keep
Watch by his dead, too heartsick even to weep,
And hardly daring to behold the day.

Lo ! what vast splendor met my startled eyes,
What unimagined space, what vision wide !
Turrets and domes, now blue, now softest green,
In one unbroken circuit kissed the skies ;
While, veiled in soft clouds, radiant as a bride,
Shone one far sapphire peak till then unseen !

QUESTIONINGS

FORTH from earth's councils thou hast passed, O friend,
To those high circles where God's angels are,
Angels that need no light of sun or star !
No eye may follow thee as thou dost wend
Thy lofty way where heaven's pure heights ascend—
Above the reach of earthly fret or jar,
Where no rude touch the blissful peace can mar,
Where all harsh sounds in one soft concord blend.
What have ye seen, O beauty-loving eyes ?
What have ye heard, O ears attuned to hear
And to interpret heaven's high harmonies ?
What problems hast thou solved, thou who with clear
Undaunted gaze didst search the farthest skies ?
And dost thou still love on, O heart most dear ?

REMEMBRANCE

I DO remind me how, when, by a bier,
I looked my last on an unanswering face
Serenely waiting for the grave's embrace,
One who would fain have comforted said : " Dear,
This is the worst. Life's bitterest drop is here.
Impartial fate has done you this one grace,
That till you go to your appointed place,
Or soon or late, there is no more to fear."
It was not true, my soul ! it was not true !
" Thou art not lost while I remember thee,
Lover and friend ! " I cry, with bated breath.
What if the years, slow-creeping like the blue,
Resistless tide, should blot that face from me ?
Not to remember would be worse than death !

IN THE HIGH TOWER

SAFE in the high tower of thy love I wait,
Secure and still whatever winds may blow,
Although no more thy banners, bending low,
Salute me from afar, when, all elate,
I haste to meet thee at the postern-gate.
No more I hear thy trumpet's eager flow
Through the far, listening silence come and go
To greet me where I bide in lonely state.
Thy King hath sent thee on some high emprise,
Some lofty embassy, some noble quest,
To a strange land whence cometh sound nor sign.
Yet evermore I lift my tranquil eyes,
Knowing that Love but doeth Love's behest—
Afar or near, my dear lord still is mine!

AFTERNOON SONGS

FOUR-O'CLOCKS

IT is mid-afternoon. Long, long ago
Each morning-glory sheathed the slender horn
It blew so gayly on the hills of morn,
And fainted in the noontide's fervid glow.

Gone are the dew-drops from the rose's heart—
Gone with the freshness of the early hours,
The songs that filled the air with silver showers,
The lovely dreams that were of morn a part.

Yet still in tender light the garden lies ;
The warm, sweet winds are whispering soft and low ;
Brown bees and butterflies flit to and fro ;
The peace of heaven is in the o'erarching skies.

And here be four-o'clocks, just opening wide
Their many colored petals to the sun,
As glad to live as if the evening dun
Were far away, and morning had not died !

A DREAM OF SONGS UNSUNG

WHENCE it came I did not know,
How it came I could not tell,
But I heard the music flow
Like the pealing of a bell ;
Up and down the wild-wood arches,
Through the sombre firs and larches,
Long I heard it rise and swell ;
Long I lay, with half-shut eyes,
Wrapped in dreams of Paradise !

Then the wondrous music poured
Yet a fuller, stronger strain,
Till my soul in rapture soared
Out of reach of toil and pain !
Then, oh then, I know not how,
Then, oh then, I know not where,
I was borne, serene and slow,
Through the boundless fields of air—
Past the sunset's golden bars,
Past long ranks of glittering stars,
To a realm where time was not,
And its secrets were forgot !

Land of shadows, who may know
Where thy golden lilies blow ?
Land of shadows, on what star
In the blue depths shining far,
Or in what appointed place

In the unmeasured realms of space,
High as heaven, or deep as hell,
Thou dost lie what tongue can tell ?
Send from out thy mystic portals
With the holy chrism to-day,
One of all thy high immortals
Who shall teach me what to say !

O beloveds, all the air
Was a faint, ethereal mist
Touched with rose and amethyst—
Glints of gold, and here and there
Purple splendors that were gone,
Like the glory of the dawn,
Ere one caught them. Soft and gray,
Lit by many a pearly ray,
Were the low skies bending dim
To the far horizon's rim ;
And the landscape stretched away,
Fair, illusive, like a dream
Wherein all things do but seem !
There were mountains, but they rose
O'er the subtile vale's repose,
Light as clouds that far and high
Soar to meet the untroubled sky.
There were trees that overhead
Wide their sheltering branches spread,
Yet were empty as the shade
By the quivering vine-leaves made.
There were roses, rich with bloom,
Swinging censers of perfume
Sweet as fragrant winds of May
Blowing through spring's secret bowers ;
Yet so phantom-like were they
That they seemed the ghosts of flowers.

Oh, the music sweet and strange
In that land's enchanted range !
Like the pealing of the bells
When the brazen flowers are swinging
And the angelus is ringing,
Soaring, echoing, far and near,
Through the vales and up the dells—
Softly on the enraptured ear
A melodious murmur swells !
As the rhythm of the river
Day and night goes on forever,
So that pulsing stream of song
Rolls its silver waves along.
Even silence is but sound,
Deeper, softer, more profound !

All the portals were thrown wide !
Stretching far on either side
Ran the streets, like silver mist,
By the moon's pale splendor kissed ;
And adown the shadowy way,
Forth from many a still retreat,
One by one, and two by two,
Or in goodly companies ;
Gliding on in long array,
Light and fleet, with silent feet,
One by one, and two by two,
Phantoms that I could not number,
Countless as the wraiths of slumber,
Passed before my wondering eyes !

Then I grew aware of one
Standing by me in the dun,
Gray half-twilight. All the place
Grew softly radiant ; but his face,

Albeit unveiled, I could not see
For the awe that compassed me.
Swift I spoke, by longings swayed
Deeper than my words betrayed :
“ Master,” with clasped hands I prayed,
“ Who are these ? Are they the dead ? ”
“ Nay, they never lived,” he said ;
“ Whence art thou ? How camest thou here ? ”
Low I answered, then, in fear :
“ Sir, I know not ; as I lay
Dreaming at the close of day,
Wondrous music, thrilling through me,
To this land of phantoms drew me,
Though I knew not how or why,
Even as instinct draws the bird
Where Spring’s far-off voice is heard.
Tell me, Master, where am I ? ”
“ Thou art in the border-land,
On the farthest, utmost strand
Of the sea that lies between
All that is and is not seen.
Thou art where the wraiths of song
Come and go, a phantom throng.
'Tis their heart’s melodious beat
Fills the air with whispers sweet !
These, O child, are songs unsung—
Songs unbreathed by human tongue ;
These are they that all in vain
Mightiest masters wooed amain—
Children of their heart and brain
That they could not warm to life
By their being’s utmost strife.
Every bard that ever sung
Since the hoary earth was young
Knew the song he could not sing

Was his soul's best blossoming,
Knew the thought he could not hold
Shrined his spirit's purest gold.
Look ! ”

Where rose the city's gate
In majestic, sculptured state,
From a far-off battle-plain,
Through the javelins' silver rain
Bearing buckler, lance, and shield,
And their standard's glittering field,
Eager, yet with shout nor din,
Came a great host trooping in.
Burned their eyes with martial fire,
And the glow of proud desire,
Such as gods and hero's filled
When their mighty souls were thrilled
By old Homer's golden lyre !

Under dim cathedral arches
Pacing sad, pacing slow,
As to beat of funeral marches
Or to music's rhythmic flow—
With their solemn brows uplifted,
And their hands upon their breasts,
Where the deepest shadows drifted,
One by one pale phantoms pressed.
Lost in dreams of heights supernal,
Mystic dreams of Paradise,
Or of woful depths infernal,

Slow they passed before mine eyes.
Oh, the vision's pallid splendor !
Oh, the grandeur of their mien—
Kin, by birthright proud and tender,
To the matchless Florentine !

In stately solitude,
Whereon might none intrude—
Majestic, grand and calm,
And bearing each the palm ;
Dwelling, serene and fair,
In most enchanted air,
Where softest music crept
O'er harp-strings deftly swept,
And organ-thunders rolled
Like storm-winds through the wold,
They stood in strength sublime
Beyond the bounds of time—
They who had been a part
Of Milton's mighty heart !

And where, mysterious ones,
Are Shakespeare's princely sons,
Bearing in lavish hands
The spoil of many lands ?
From castles lifted far
Against the evening star,
Where royal banners float
O'er rampart, tower, and moat,
And the white moonlight sleeps
Upon the Donjon keeps ;
From fairy-haunted dells
Among the lonely fells ;
From banks where wild thyme grows
And the blue violet blows ;
From caverns grim, and caves
Lashed by the deep sea-waves ;
From darkling forest shade,
From busy haunts of trade,
From market, court, and camp,
Where folly rings her bells,

Or sorrow tolls her knells,
Or where in cloister cells
The scholar trims his lamp—
Wearing the sword, the gown,
The motley of the clown,
The beggar's rags, the dole
Of the remorseful soul,
The wedding-robe, the ring,
The shroud's white blossoming,
O myriad-minded man,
Thus thine immortal clan
Passed down the endless ways
Of the eternal days!

Then said I to my spirit :
“ These are they who wore the crown ;
Well the king's sons may inherit
All his glory and renown.
Where are they—the songs unsung
By the humbler bards whose lyres
Through earth's lowly vales have rung,
Like the notes of woodland choirs ?
They whose silver-sandalled feet
Never climbed the clouds to meet ? ”

Where ?—The air grew full of laughter
Low and sweet, and following after
Came the softest breath of singing
As if lily bells were ringing ;
And from all the happy closes,
Crowned with daisies, crowned with roses,
Bearing woodland ferns for palm-boughs in
 their hands,
From the dim secluded places,
Through the wide enchanted spaces,

With their song-illuminated faces
Swept the shadowy minstrel bands !

Songs unsung, the high and lowly,
Songs, the holy and unholy,
In that purest air grown wholly
Clean from every spot and stain !
And I knew as endless ages
Still were turning life's full pages,
Each should find his own again—
Find the song he could not sing,
As his soul's best blossoming !

QUESTIONING A ROSE

IT was fair, it was sweet,
And it blossomed at my feet.

“ O thou peerless rose ! ” I said,
“ Art thou heir to roses dead—
Roses that their petals shed
In the winds of long ago ?
Who bequeathed to thee the glow
Of thy perfect, radiant heart ?
What proud queen of fire and snow
Lived to make thee what thou art ?

“ Who gave thee thy nameless grace
And the beauty of thy face,
Touched thy lips with fragrant wine,
Pledging thee in cups divine ?
On some long-forgotten day,
When earth kept glad holiday,
One bright rose was born, I think,
Dewy, sweet, and soft and pink—
Born, more blest than others are,
To be thy progenitor !

“ Oh, the roses that have died
In the unremembered Junes !
Oh, the roses that have sighed
Unto long-forgotten runes !
Dost thou know their secrets dear ?

Have they whispered in thine ear
Mysteries of the rain and dew,
And the sunshine that they knew?
Have they told thee how the breeze
Woodyed them, and the amorous bees?

“Silent, art thou? Thy repose
Mocks me, yet I fain would know
Art thou kin to one rare rose
Of a summer long ago?
It was sweet, it was fair;
Someone twined it in my hair,
When my young cheek, blushing red,
Shamed the roses, someone said.
Dust and ashes though it be,
Still its soul lives on in thee.”

THE FALLOW FIELD

THE sun comes up and the sun goes down ;
The night mist shroudeth the sleeping town ;
But if it be dark or if it be day,
If the tempests beat or the breezes play,
Still here on this upland slope I lie,
Looking up to the changeful sky.

Naught am I but a fallow field ;
Never a crop my acres yield.
Over the wall at my right hand
Stately and green the corn-blades stand,
And I hear at my left the flying feet
Of the winds that rustle the bending wheat.

Often while yet the morn is red
I list for our master's eager tread.
He smiles at the young corn's towering height,
He knows the wheat is a goodly sight,
But he glances not at the fallow field
Whose idle acres no wealth may yield.

Sometimes the shout of the harvesters
The sleeping pulse of my being stirs,
And as one in a dream I seem to feel
The sweep and the rush of the swinging steel,
Or I catch the sound of the gay refrain
As they heap their wains with the golden grain.

Yet, O my neighbors, be not too proud,
Though on every tongue your praise is loud.
Our mother Nature is kind to me,
And I am beloved by bird and bee,
And never a child that passes by
But turns upon me a grateful eye.

Over my head the skies are blue ;
I have my share of the rain and dew ;
I bask like you in the summer sun
When the long bright days pass, one by one,
And calm as yours is my sweet repose
Wrapped in the warmth of the winter snows.

For little our loving mother cares
Which the corn or the daisy bears,
Which is rich with the ripening wheat,
Which with the violet's breath is sweet,
Which is red with the clover bloom,
Or which for the wild sweet-fern makes room.

Useless under the summer sky
Year after year men say I lie.
Little they know what strength of mine
I give to the trailing blackberry vine ;
Little they know how the wild grape grows,
Or how my life-blood flushes the rose.

Little they think of the cups I fill
For the mosses creeping under the hill ;
Little they think of the feast I spread
For the wild wee creatures that must be fed :
Squirrel and butterfly, bird and bee,
And the creeping things that no eye may see.

Lord of the harvest, thou dost know
How the summers and winters go.
Never a ship sails east or west
Laden with treasures at my behest,
Yet my being thrills to the voice of God
When I give my gold to the golden-rod.

OUT AND IN

A SHIP went sailing out to sea,
A gallant ship and gay,
When skies were bright as skies could be,
One sunny morn in May.
The light winds blew,
The white sails flew,
The pennants floated far;
No stain I saw,
Nor any flaw,
From deck to shining spar!
And from the prow, with eager eyes,
Hope gazed afar—to Paradise.

A ship came laboring in from sea,
One wild December night;
Ah! never ship was borne to lee
In sadder, sorrier plight!
Rent were her sails
By furious gales,
No pennants floated far;
Twisted and torn
And all forlorn
Were shuddering mast and spar!
But from the prow Faith's steady eyes
Caught the near light of Paradise!

HER FLOWERS

“NAY, nay,” she whispered low,
“I will not have these buds of folded snow,
Nor yet the pallid bloom
Of the chill tuberose, heavy with perfume,
Nor lilies waxen white,
To go with her into the grave’s dark night.

“But now that she is dead
Bring ye the royal roses blushing red,
Roses that on her breast
All summer long, by these pale hands caressed,
Have lain in happy calm,
Breathing their lives away in bloom and balm !”

Roses for all the joy
Of perfect hours when life had no alloy ;
When hope was glad and gay,
And young Love sang his blissful roundelay ;
And to her eager eyes
Each new day oped the gates of Paradise.

But, for that she hath wept,
And over buried hopes long vigil kept,
Bring mystic passion-flowers,
To tell the tale of sacrificial hours
When, lifting up her cross,
She bore it bravely on through pain and loss !

Then at her blessèd feet,
That never more shall haste on errands sweet,
Lay fragrant mignonette
And fair sweet-peas in dainty garlands set,—
Dear humble flowers, that make
Each passer-by the gladder for their sake !

For she who lieth here
Trod not alone the high paths shining clear,
With light of star and sun
Falling undimmed her lofty place upon ;
But stooped to lowliest ways,
Filling with fragrance all the passing days !

THREE LADDIES

O SAILORS sailing north,
Where the wild white surges roar,
And fierce winds and strong winds
Blow down from Labrador—
Have you seen my three brave laddies,
My merry red-cheeked laddies,
Three bold, adventurous laddies,
On some tempestuous shore?

O sailors sailing south,
Where the seas are calm and blue,
And light clouds and soft clouds
Are floating over you,
Say, have you seen my laddies,
My three bright, winsome laddies,
My brown-haired, smiling laddies,
With hearts so leal and true?

O sailors sailing east,
Ask the sea-gulls sweeping by;
O sailors sailing west,
Ask the eagles soaring high,
If they have seen my laddies,
My careless, heedless laddies,
Three debonair young laddies,
Beneath the wide, wide sky?

O sailors, if you find them,
Pray send them back to me ;
For them the winds go sighing
Through every lonely tree—
For these three wandering laddies,
My tender, bright-eyed laddies,
The laughter-loving laddies,
Whom they no longer see.

There are three men who love me,
Three men with bearded lips ;
But oh ! ye gallant sailors
Who sail the sea in ships—
In elf-land, or in cloud-land,
Or on the dreamland shore,
Can you find the little laddies
Whom I can find no more ?
Three quiet, thoughtful laddies,
Three merry, winsome laddies,
Three rollicking, frolicking laddies,
On any far-off shore ?

SUMMER, 1882

R. W. E.

O SUMMER, thou fair laggard, where art thou ?
In what far sunlit land of balm and bloom,
What slumbrous bowers of beauty and perfume,
Are roses crowning thine imperial brow ?

Where art thou, Summer ? We should see thy feet
Even now upon the mountains. All the hills
Rise up to greet thee. Nature's great heart thrills,
Faint with expectant joy. Where art thou, sweet ?

And Summer answered : " Lo ! I wait ! I wait !
To the far North I bend my listening ear ;
By day, by night, my soul keeps watch to hear
One high, clear strain that rises soon nor late !

" Why should I haste where light and song have fled ?
The ' Woodnotes ' wake no more the Master's lyre ;
The ' haughty day ' fills no ' blue urn with fire '
When its great lover lieth cold and dead ! "

THORNLESS ROSES

“ NO ROSE may bloom without a thorn ? ”

 Come down the garden paths and see
How brightly in the scented air
 They bloom for you and me !

See how, like rosy clouds, they lie
 Against the perfect, stainless blue !
See how they toss their airy heads,
 And smile for me, for you !

No scanty largess, meanly doled—
 No pallid blooms, by two, by three,
But a whole crowd of pink-white wings
 Fluttering for you and me.

So fair they are I cannot choose ;
 I pluck the rich spoils here and there ;
I heap them on your waiting arms ;
 I twine them in your hair.

There is no thorn among them all—
 No sharp sting in the heart of bliss—
No bitter in the honeyed cup—
 No burning in the kiss.

Nay, quote the proverb if you must,
 And mock the truth you will not see ;
Nathless, Love's thornless roses blow
 Somewhere for you and me.

TREASURE-SHIPS

O BEAUTIFUL, stately ships,
Ye come from over the seas,
With every sail full spread
To the glad, rejoicing breeze !
Ye come from the dusky East,
Ye come from the golden West,
As birds that out of the far blue sky
Fly each to its sheltered nest.

All spoils of the earth ye bring ;
From the isles of far Cathay,
From the fabled shores of the Orient,
The realms of eternal day.
The prisoned light of a thousand gems,
The gleam of the virgin gold,
Lustre of silver, and sheen of pearl,
Shut up in the narrow hold.

Shawls from the looms of Ispahan ;
Ivory white as milk ;
Shimmer of satin and rare brocade,
And fold upon fold of silk ;
Gauzes that India's maidens wear ;
Spices, and rare perfumes ;
Fruits that hold in their honeyed cups
The wealth of the summer blooms.

The blood of a thousand vines ;
The cotton's drifted snow ;
The fragrant heart of the precious woods
That deep in the tropics grow ;
The strength of the giant hills ;
The might of the iron ore ;
The golden corn, and the yellow wheat
From earth's broad threshing-floor.

Yet, O ye beautiful ships !
There are ships that come not back,
With flying pennant and swelling sail,
Over yon shining track !
Who can reckon their precious stores,
Or measure the might have been ?
Who can tell what they held for us—
The ships that will ne'er come in ?

CHOOSING

MEADOW-SWEET or lily fair—
Which shall it be ?
Clematis or brier-rose,
Blooming for me ?
Spicy pink, or violet
With the dews of morning wet,
Sweet peas or mignonette—
Which shall it be ?

Flowers in the garden-beds,
Flowers everywhere ;
Blue-bells and yellow-bells
Swinging in the air ;
Purple pansies, golden pied ;
Pink-white daisies, starry-eyed ;
Gay nasturtiums, deeply dyed,
Climbing everywhere !

Oh, the roses darkly red—
See, how they burn !
Glows with all the summer heat
Each crimson urn.
Bridal roses pure as snow,
Yellow roses all a-blow,
Sweet blush-roses drooping low,
Wheresoe'er I turn !

Life is so full, so sweet—

How can I choose ?

If I gather *this* rose,

That I must lose !

All are not for me to wear ;

I can only have my share ;

Thorns are hiding here and there ;

How can I choose ?

NOT MINE

It is not mine to run
With eager feet
Along life's crowded ways,
My Lord to meet.

It is not mine to pour
The oil and wine,
Or bring the purple robe
And linen fine.

It is not mine to break
At his dear feet
The alabaster-box
Of ointment sweet.

It is not mine to bear
His heavy cross,
Or suffer, for his sake,
All pain and loss.

It is not mine to walk
Through valleys dim,
Or climb far mountain-heights
Alone with him.

He hath no need of me
In grand affairs,
Where fields are lost, or crowns
Won unawares.

Yet, Master, if I may
 Make one pale flower
Bloom brighter, for thy sake,
 Through one short hour ;

If I, in harvest-fields
 Where strong ones reap,
May bind one golden sheaf
 For Love to keep ;

May speak one quiet word
 When all is still,
Helping some fainting heart
 To bear thy will ;

Or sing one high, clear song,
 On which may soar
Some glad soul heavenward,
 I ask no more !

THE CHAMBER OF SILENCE

ONE autumn day we three,
Who long had borne each other company—
Grief, and my Heart, and I—
Walked out beneath a dull and leaden sky.

The fields were bare and brown ;
From the still trees the dead leaves fluttered down ;
There were no birds to sing,
Or cleave the air on swift, rejoicing wing.

We sought the barren sand
Beside the moaning sea, and, hand in hand,
Paced its slow length, and talked
Of our supremest sorrows as we walked.

Slow shaking each bowed head,
“ There is no anguish like to ours,” we said ;
“ The glancing eyes of morn
Fall on no souls more utterly forlorn.”

But suddenly, across
A narrow fiord wherein wild billows toss,
We saw before our eyes,
High hung above the tide, a temple rise—

A temple wondrous fair,
Lifting its shining turrets in the air,
All touched with golden gleams,
Like the bright miracles we see in dreams.

Grief turned and looked at me.
“ We must go thither, O my friends,” said she ;
Then, saying nothing more,
With rapid, gliding step passed on before.

And we—my Heart and I—
Where Grief went, we went, following silently,
Till in sweet solitude
Beneath the temple’s vaulted roof we stood.

’Twas like a hollow pearl—
A vast white sacred chamber, where the whirl
Of passion stirred not, where
A luminous splendor trembled in the air.

“ O friends, I know this place,”
Said Grief at last, “ this lofty, silent space,
Where, either soon or late,
I and my kindred all shall lie in state.”

“ But do Griefs die ? ” I cried.
“ Some die—not all,” full calmly she replied.
“ Yet all at last will lie
In this fair chamber, slumbering quietly.

“ Chamber of Silence, this ;
Who brings his Grief here doth not go amiss.
Mine hour hath come. We three
Will walk, O friends, no more in company.”

Then was I dumb. My Heart
And I—how could we with our dear Grief part,
Who for so many a day
Had walked beside us in our lonely way ?

But she, with matchless grace,
And a sweet smile upon her tear-wet face,
Said, "Leave me here to sleep,
Where every Grief forgets at last to weep."

What could we do but go?
We turned with slow, reluctant feet, but lo!
The pearly door had closed,
Shutting us in where all the Griefs reposed.

"Nay, go not back," she said;
"Retrace no steps. Go farther on instead."
Then, on the other side,
On noiseless hinge another door swung wide,

Through which we onward passed
Into a chamber lowlier than the last,
But, oh! so sweet and calm
That the hushed air was like a holy psalm.

"Chamber of Peace" was writ
Where the low vaulted roof arched over it.
Then knew we Grief must cease
When sacred Silence leadeth unto Peace.

THREE ROSES

“ Oh, shall it be a red rose, a red rose, a red rose,
A deep-tinted red rose ? ” said she.

“ In the sunny garden closes,
How they burn, the dark-red roses,
How they lift up their glowing cups to me ! ”

“ Oh, shall it be a blush rose, a blush rose, a blush rose,
A dewy, dainty blush rose ? ” said she.

“ At its heart a flush so tender,
With what veiled and softened splendor
Droopeth now its languid head toward me ! ”

“ Oh, shall it be a white rose, a white rose, a white rose,
A fair and fragrant white rose ? ” said she.

“ With its pale cheek tinted faintly,
’Tis a vestal, pure and saintly,
Yet its silver lamp is shining now for me ! ”

FOUR LETTERS

(INSCRIBED TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES)

[In an old almanac of the year 1809, against the date August 29th, there is this record, "Son b." The sand that was thrown upon the fresh ink seventy years ago can still be seen upon the page.]

FOUR letters on a yellow page
Writ when the century was young ;
A few small grains of shining sand
Across it lightly flung !

A child was born—child nameless yet ;
A son to love till life was o'er ;
But did no strange, sweet prescience stir,
Teaching of something more ? .

Thy son ! O father, hadst thou known
What now the wide world knows of him,
How had thy pulses thrilled with joy,
How had thine eye grown dim !

Couldst thou, through all the swift, bright years,
Have looked, with glad, far-reaching gaze,
And seen him as he stands to-day,
Crowned with unfading bays—

While Love's red roses at his feet
Pour all their wealth of rare perfume,
And Truth's white lilies, pure as snow,
His lofty way illumine—

How had thy heart's strong throbbing shook
The eager pen, the firm right hand,
That threw upon this record quaint
These grains of glittering sand !

O irony of Time and Fate !
That saves and loses, makes and mars,
Keeps the small dust upon the scales,
And blotteth out the stars !

Kingdoms and thrones have passed away ;
Conquerors have fallen, empires died,
And countless sons of men gone down
Beneath War's crimson tide.

The whole wide earth has changed its face ;
Nations clasp hands across the seas ;
They speak, and winds and waves repeat
The mighty symphonies.

Mountains have bowed their haughty crests,
And opened wide their ponderous doors ;
The sea hath gathered in its dead,
Love-wept on alien shores.

Proud cities, wrapped in fire and flame,
Have challenged all the slumbering land ;
Yet neither Time nor Change has touched
These few bright grains of sand !

VALDEMAR

WITHIN a city quaint and old,
When reigned King Alcinor the Bold,
There dwelt a sculptor whose renown
With pride and wonder filled the town.
And yet he had not reached his prime ;
The first warm glow of summer-time
Had but just touched his radiant face,
And moulded to a statelier grace
The stalwart form that trod the earth
As it had been of princely birth.
So fair, so strong, so brave was he,
With such a sense of mastery,
That Alcinor upon his throne
No kinglier gifts from life could own
Than those it brought from near and far
To the young sculptor, Valdemar !
Mayhap he was not rich—for Fame,
To lend its magic to his name,
Had outrun Fortune's swiftest pace
And conquered in the friendly race.
But a fair home was his, where bees
Hummed in the laden mulberry-trees ;
Where cyclamens, with rosy flush,
Brightened the lingering twilight hush,
And the gladiolus' fiery plume
Mocked the red rose's brilliant bloom ;
Where violet and wind-flower hid

The acacia's golden gloom amid ;
Where starry jasmines climbed, and where,
Serenely calm, divinely fair,
Like a white lily, straight and tall,
The loveliest flower among them all,
His sweet young wife, Hermione,
Sang to the child upon her knee !

Here beauteous visions haunted him,
Peopling the shadows soft and dim ;
Here the old gods around him cast
The glamour of their splendors past.
Jove thundered from the awful sky ;
Proud Juno trod the earth once more ;
Pale Isis, veiled in mystery,
Her smile of mystic meaning wore ;
Apollo joyed in youth divine,
And Bacchus wreathed the fragrant vine.
Here chaste Diana, crescent-crowned,
With virgin footsteps spurned the ground ;
Here rose fair Venus from the sea,
And that sad ghost, Persephone,
Wandered, a very shade of shades,
Amid the moonlit myrtle glades.
Nor they alone. The Heavenly Child,
The Holy Mother, meek and mild,
Angels on glad wing soaring free,
Pale, praying saints on bended knee,
Martyrs with palms, and heroes brave
Who for their guerdon won a grave,
Earth's laughing children, rosy sweet,
And the soul's phantoms, fair and fleet—
All these were with him night and day,
Charming the happy hours away !
Oh, who so rich as Valdemar ?

What ill his joyous life can mar ?
With home and glorious visions blest,
Glad in the work he loveth best !

But Love's clear eyes are quick to see ;
And one fair spring, Hermione.
Sitting beneath her mulberry-tree
With her young children at her knee,
Saw Valdemar from day to day,
As one whose thoughts were far away,
With folded arms and drooping head
Pace the green aisles with silent tread ;
Saw him stand moodily apart
With idle hands and brooding heart,
Or gaze at his still forms of clay,
Himself as motionless as they !
“ O Valdemar ! ” she cried, “ you bear
Some burden that I do not share !
I am your wife, your own true wife ;
Shut me not out from heart and life !
Why brood you thus in silent pain ? ”
As shifts the changing weather-vane,
So came the old smile to his face,
Saluting her with courtly grace.
“ Nay, nay, Hermione, not so !
No secret, bitter grief I know ;
But, haunting all my dreams by night
And thoughts by day, one vision bright,
One nameless wonder, near me stands,
Claiming its birthright at my hands.
It hath your eyes, Hermione,
Your tender lips that smile for me ;
It hath your perfect, stately grace,
The matchless beauty of your face.
But it hath more ! for never yet

On brow of earthly mould was set
Such splendor and such light as streams
From this rare phantom of my dreams !”

Lightly she turned, and led him through
Under the jasmines wet with dew,
Into a wide, cool room, shut in
From the great city’s whirl and din—
Then, smiling, touched a heap of clay.
“ Dear idler, do thy work, I pray !
Thy radiant phantom lieth hid
The mould of centuries amid,
Waiting till thou shalt bid it rise
And live beneath the wondering skies !”

Then rose a hot flush to his cheek ;
His stammering lips were slow to speak.
“ Hermione,” he said at length,
As one who gathers up his strength,
“ Hermione, my wife, I go
Far from thee on a journey slow
And long and perilous ; for I know
Somewhere upon the earth there is
A finer, purer clay than this,
From which I’ll mould a shape more fair
Than ever breathed in earthly air !
I go to seek it !”

“ Ah ! ” she said,
With smiling lips, but tearful eyes,
Half lifted in a grieved surprise,
“ How shall I then be comforted ?
Not always do we find afar
The good we seek, my Valdemar !
This common, wayside clay thy hand

Hath been most potent to command.
Yet I—I will not bid thee stay.
Go, if thou must, and find thy clay !”

Then his long journeyings began,
And still his hope his steps outran.
O'er desert sands he came and went ;
He crossed a mighty continent ;
Plunged into forests dark and lone ;
In jungles heard the panther's moan ;
Climbed the far mountains' lofty heights ;
Watched alien stars through weary nights ;
While more than once, on trackless seas,
His white sails caught the eddying breeze.
Yet all his labor was for nought,
And never found he what he sought,
Or far or near. The finer clay
But mocked his eager search away.

Ofttimes he came, with weary feet,
Back to the home so still and sweet
Where his fair wife, Hermione,
Dwelt with her children at her knee ;
But never once his eager hand
Thrilled the mute clay with high command.
One day she spoke : “ O Valdemar,
Cease from your wanderings wide and far !
Life is not long. Why waste it, then,
Chasing false fires through marsh and fen ?
Mould your fair statue while you may ;
High purpose sanctifies the clay.”

He answered her, “ My dream must wait,
Fortune will aid me, soon or late !
Perhaps the clay I may not find—

But a strange tale is in the wind
Of an old man whose life has been
Shut up wild solitudes within
On Alpine mountains. He has found
What I have sought the world around.
A learned, godly man, he knows
How the full tide of being flows ;
And he, in some mysterious way,
Makes, if he cannot find, the clay.
He will his secret share with me—
I go to him, Hermione ! ”

“ But, Valdemar,” she cried, “ time flies,
And while you dream, the vision dies !
And look ! Our children suffer lack ;
There is no coat for Claudio’s back ;
Theresa’s little feet, unshod,
Are torn by shards on which they trod ;
And Marcius cried but yesterday
When the lads mocked him at their play.
The very house is crumbling down ;
The broken hearth-stone needs repair ;
The roof is open to the air—
It wakes the laughter of the town !
O Valdemar ! if you must go
Up to those trackless fields of snow,
Mould first from yonder common clay
Something to keep the wolf away—
A Virgin for some humble shrine,
A soldier clad in armor fine,
Or even such toys as Andrefels
To laughing, wondering children sells.”

“ Now murmur not, Hermione,
But be thou patient,” answered he.

“Why mind the laughter of the town ?
It cannot shake my fair renown !
A touch of hardship, now and then,
Will never harm our little men ;
And as for this old, crumbling roof,
Let rude winds put it to the proof,
And fierce heats gnaw the hearth-stone ! I
Surely the Land of Promise spy,
Where the fair vision of my dreams,
Clothed in transcendent beauty, gleams !
In its white hand it holdeth up
For us, my love, a brimming cup
Where wealth and fame and joy divine
Mingle in life’s most sparkling wine.
Bid me God-speed, Hermione,
And kiss me, ere I go from thee ! ”

So on he sped, from day to day—
Past wheat-fields yellowing in the sun,
Where scarlet-coated poppies run,
Gay soldiers ready for the fray—
Past vineyards purpling on the hills,
Past sleeping lakes and dancing rills,
And homes like dovecotes nestling high
Midway between the earth and sky !
Then on he passed through valleys dim
Crowded with shadows gaunt and grim,
Up towering heights whence glaciers launch
Their swift-winged ships for seaward flight,
Or where, dread messenger of fright,
Sweeps down the awful avalanche !
And still upon the mountain side
To every man he met he cried,
“ Where shall I find, oh ! tell me where,
The hermit of this upper air,

Who Nature's inmost secret knows ? ”
And, pointing to the eternal snows,
Each man replied, with wagging head,
“ Up yonder, somewhere, it is said.”

At length one day, as sank the sun,
He reached a low hut, dark and dun,
And, entering unbidden, found
An old man stretched upon the ground :
A white-haired, venerable man,
Whose eyes had hardly light to scan
The face that, blanched with awful fear,
Bent down, his failing breath to hear.
“ *Pax vobiscum*,” he murmured low,
“ Shrive me, O brother, ere I go ! ”

“ No priest am I,” cried Valdemar.
“ Alas ! alas ! I came from far
To learn thy secret of the clay—
Speak to me, sire, while yet you may ! ”
But while he wet the parchèd lips,
The dull eyes closed in death's eclipse ;
And the old seer in silence lay,
Himself a thing of pallid clay,
With all his secrets closely hid
As Ramses' in the pyramid.

Long time within that lonely place
Valdemar lived, but found no trace
In learnèd book or parchment scroll
(The ink scarce dry upon the roll)
Of aught the stars had taught to him.
Within the wide horizon's rim,
Nor earth, nor sky, nor winds at play,
Knew the lost secret of the clay.

Then sought he, after journeyings hard,
The holy monks of St. Bernard.
But they—ah, yes!—they knew him well,
A man not ruled by book and bell.
Godly, perhaps—but much inclined
Some newer road to heaven to find.
And was he dead? God rest his soul,
After this life of toil and dole !

And that was all! O Valdemar !
Fly to thy desolate home afar,
Where wasted, worn, Hermione,
With her pale children at her knee,
Beside the broken hearth-stone weeps !

He finds her, smiling as she sleeps,
For night more tender is than day,
And softly wipes our tears away.
“Oh, wake, Hermione !” he cries,
As one whose spirit inly dies ;
“Hear me confess that I have been
False to thee in my pride and sin !
God give me grace from this blest day
To do His work in common clay !”

Next morn, in humble, sweet content,
Into his studio he went,
Eager to test his willing hand,
And rule the clay with wise command.
But no fair wonder first he wrought,
No marvel of creative thought,
Not even a Virgin for a shrine,
Or soldier clad in armor fine—
Only such toys as Andrefels
To laughing, wondering children sells !

One day he knelt him gravely down
Beside the hearth-stone, rent and brown.
“ And now, my patient wife,” said he,
“ What can be done with this, we’ll see.”
With straining arm and crimsoned face
He pried the mortar from its place,
Lifted the heavy stone aside,
And left a cavern yawning wide.
Oh, wondrous tale ! At set of sun
The guerdon of his search was won ;
And where his broken hearth-stone lay
He found at last the perfect clay !

JUBILATE !

JUBILATE ! Jubilate !
Christ the Lord is risen to-day !
Hear the mighty chorus swelling
Over land and over sea !
River calls aloud to river,
Mountain peak to mountain peak—
Jubilate ! Jubilate !
Christ the Lord is risen to-day !

Waken, roses, from your slumbers !
Lilies, wake—for he is near !
Happy bells in wild-wood arches,
Ring and swing in sweet accord !
Lift your voices, O ye maples,
Sing aloud, ye stately pines,
Jubilate ! Jubilate !
Christ the Lord is risen to-day !

O thou goddess of the springtime,
Fair Oстера, thou art dead !
Never more shall priests and vestals
Weave fresh garlands for thy shrine ;
But the happy voices ringing
Over land and over sea,
Swell the mighty jubilate—
“ Christ the Lord is risen to-day ! ”

EASTER LILIES

O YE dear and blessed ones who are done with sighing,
Do the Easter Lilies blow for you to-day ?
Do the shining angels, through Heaven's arches flying,
Bear the snow-white blossoms on your breasts to lay ?

For we cannot reach you, O our well belovèd—
Nothing can we do for you save to hold you dear ;
From our close embraces ye are far removèd,
And our empty yearnings cannot bring you near.

Once on Easter mornings glad we gave you greeting—
Gave you fair flowers, singing, " Christ is risen to-day ! "
Hands were clasped together, hearts and lips were meeting—
Earth and we together sang a roundelay !

Now—yet why repine we ?—ye are done with sorrow ;
Life and Lent are over, with their prayers and tears ;
After night of watching came the glad to-morrow,
Came the blessed sunshine of the eternal years.

Surely in Jerusalem, where the Lord Christ reigneth,
Ye with saints and martyrs keep this festal day—
And the holy angels, ere its glory waneth,
Heaven's own Easter Lilies on your breasts shall lay !

“O WIND THAT BLOWS OUT OF THE WEST”

O WIND that blows out of the West,
Thou hast swept over mountain and sea,
Dost thou bear on thy swift, glad wings
The breath of my love to me?
Hast thou kissed her warm, sweet lips?
Or tangled her soft brown hair?
Or fluttered the fragrant heart
Of the rose she loves to wear?

O sun that goes down in the West,
Hast thou seen my love to-day,
As she sits in her beautiful prime
Under skies so far away?
Hast thou gilded a path for her feet,
Or deepened the glow on her cheeks,
Or bent from the skies to hear
The low, sweet words she speaks?

O stars that are bright in the West
When the hush of the night is deep,
Do ye see my love as she lies
Like a chaste, white flower asleep?
Does she smile as she walks with me
In the light of a happy dream,
While the night winds rustle the leaves,
And the light waves ripple and gleam?

O birds that fly out of the West,
Do ye bring me a message from her,
As sweet as your love-notes are,
When the warm spring breezes stir ?
Did she whisper a word of me
As your tremulous wings swept by,
Or utter my name, mayhap,
In a single passionate cry ?

O voices out of the West,
Ye are silent every one,
And never an answer comes
From wind, or stars, or sun !
And the blithe birds come and go
Through the boundless fields of space,
As reckless of human prayers
As if earth were a desert place !

A SUMMER SONG

ROLY-POLY honey-bee,
Humming in the clover,
Under you the tossing leaves,
And the blue sky over,
Why are you so busy, pray?
Never still a minute,
Hovering now above a flower,
Now half-buried in it!

Jaunty robin-redbreast,
Singing loud and cheerly,
From the pink-white apple tree
In the morning early,
Tell me, is your merry song
Just for your own pleasure,
Poured from such a tiny throat,
Without stint or measure?

Little yellow buttercup,
By the way-side smiling,
Lifting up your happy face,
With such sweet beguiling,
Why are you so gayly clad—
Cloth of gold your raiment?
Do the sunshine and the dew
Look to you for payment?

Roses in the garden beds,
Lilies, cool and saintly,
Darling blue-eyed violets,
Pansies, hooded quaintly,
Sweet-peas that, like butterflies,
Dance the bright skies under,
Bloom ye for your own delight,
Or for ours, I wonder!

THE URN

ACROSS the blue Atlantic waves

She sent a little gift to me :

A golden urn—a graceful toy

As one need care to see.

Smiling, I held it in my hand,

Thinking her message o'er and o'er,

Nor dreamed her swift feet pressed so near

The undiscovered shore.

Oh ! had it been a funeral urn—

The gift my darling sent to me

With loving thoughts and tender words

Across the heaving sea—

A funeral urn which might have held

Her sacred ashes, sealed in rest

Utter as that which holds in thrall

Some pulseless marble breast !

Where drifts she now ? On what far seas

Floateth to-day her golden hair ?

What stars behold her pale hands, clasped

In ecstasy of prayer ?

Forever in this thought of mine,

Like the fair Lady of Shalott,

She drifteth, drifteth with the tide,

But never comes to Camelot !

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER

“WHAT, HO!” he cried, as up and down
He rode through the streets of Windham town—
“What, ho! for the day of peace is done,
And the day of wrath too well begun!
Bring forth the grain from your barns and mills;
Drive down the cattle from off your hills;
For Boston lieth in sore distress,
Pallid with hunger and long duress:
Her children starve, while she hears the beat
And the tramp of the red-coats in every street!”

“What, ho! What, ho!” Like a storm unspent,
Over the hill-sides he came and went;
And Parson White, from his open door
Leaning bareheaded that August day,
While the sun beat down on his temples gray,
Watched him until he could see no more.
Then straight he strode to the church, and flung
His whole soul into the peal he rung;
Pulling the bell-rope till the tower
Seemed to rock in the sudden shower—

The shower of sound the farmers heard,
Rending the air like a living word!
Then swift they gathered with right good-will
From field and anvil and shop and mill,
To hear what the parson had to say
That would not keep till the Sabbath-day.

For only the women and children knew
The tale of the horsemen galloping through—
The message he bore as up and down
He rode through the streets of Windham town.

That night, as the parson sat at ease
In the porch, with his Bible on his knees,
(Thanking God that at break of day
Frederic Manning would take his way,
With cattle and sheep from off the hills,
And a load of grain from the barns and mills,
To the starving city where General Gage
Waited unholy war to wage),
His little daughter beside him stood,
Hiding her face in her muslin hood.

In her arms her own pet lamb she bore,
As it struggled down to the oaken floor :
“ It must go ; I must give my lamb,” she said,
“ To the children that cry for meat and bread,”
Then lifted to his her holy eyes,
Wet with the tears of sacrifice.
“ Nay, nay,” he answered. “ There is no need
That the hearts of babes should ache and bleed.
Run away to your bed, and to-morrow play,
You and your pet, through the livelong day.”

He laid his hand on her shining hair,
And smiled as he blessed her, standing there,
With kerchief folded across her breast,
And her small brown hands together pressed,
A quaint little maiden, shy and sweet,
With her lambkin crouched at her dainty feet.
Away to its place the lamb she led,
Then climbed the stairs to her own white bed,

While the moon rose up and the stars looked down
On the silent streets of Windham town.

But when the heralds of morning came,
Flushing the east with rosy flame,
With low of cattle and scurry of feet,
Driving his herd down the village street,
Young Manning heard from a low stone wall
A child's voice clearly yet softly call ;
And saw in the gray dusk standing there
A little maiden with shining hair,
While crowding close to her tender side
Was a snow-white lamb to her apron tied.

“ Oh, wait ! ” she cried, “ for my lamb must go
To the children crying in want and woe.
It is all I have.” And her tears fell fast
As she gave it one eager kiss—the last.
“ The road will be long to its feet. I pray
Let your arms be its bed a part of the way ;
And give it cool water and tender grass
Whenever a way-side brook you pass.”
Then away she flew like a startled deer,
Nor waited the bleat of her lamb to hear.

Young Manning lifted his steel-blue eyes
One moment up to the morning skies ;
Then, raising the lamb to his breast, he strode
Sturdily down the lengthening road.
“ Now God be my helper,” he cried, “ and lead
Me safe with my charge to the souls in need !
Through fire and flood, through dearth and dole,
Though foes assail me and war-clouds roll,
To the city in want and woe that lies
I will bear this lamb as a sacrifice.”

MARCH FOURTH

1881-1882

ONE year ago the plaudits of the crowd,
The drum's long thunder and the bugle's blare,
The bell's gay clamor, pealing clear and loud,
And rapturous music filling all the air ;

One year ago, on roofs and domes and spires,
Ten thousand banners bursting into bloom
As the proud day advanced its golden fires,
And all the crowding centuries gave it room ;

One year ago the laurel and the palm,
The upward path, the height undimmed and far,
And in the clear, strong light, serene and calm,
One high, pure spirit, shining like a star !

To-day—for loud acclaims the long lament ;
For shouts of triumph, tears that fall like rain ;
A world remembering, with anguish rent,
Thy long, un murmuring martyrdom of pain !

The year moves on ; the seasons come and go ;
Day follows day, and pale stars rise and set ;
Oh ! in yon radiant heaven dost thou know
The land that loved thee never can forget ?

It doth not swerve—it keeps its onward way,
Unfaltering still, from farthest sea to sea ;
Yet, while it owns another's rightful sway,
It patient grows and strong, remembering thee !

ROY

OUR Prince has gone to his inheritance !

Think it not strange. What if, with slight half-smile,
Some crownèd king to leave his throne should chance,
And try the rough ways of the world awhile ?

Ere he had wearied of its storm and stress,
Would he not hasten to his own again ?
Why should he bear its labor and duress,
And all the untold burden of its pain ?

Or what if from the golden palace gate
The king's fair son on some bright morn should stray ?
Would he not send his lords of high estate
To lead him back ere fell the close of day ?

Even so our King from Heaven's high portals saw
The fair young Prince where earth's dull shades advance,
And sent his messengers of love and law
To bear him home to his inheritance !

THE PAINTER'S PRAYER

"NEC ME PRÆTERMITTAS, DOMINE!"

(An incident in the painting of Holman Hunt's "Light of the World.")

"NAY," he said, "it is not done !
At to-morrow's set of sun
Come again, if you would see
What the finished thought may be."
Straight they went. The heavy door
On its hinges swung once more,
As within the studio dim
Eye and heart took heed of Him !

How the Presence filled the room,
Brightening all its dusky gloom !
Saints and martyrs turned their eyes
From the hills of Paradise ;
Rapt in holy ecstasy,
Mary smiled her Son to see,
Letting all her lilies fall
At His feet—the Lord of all !

But the painter bowed his head,
Lost in wonder and in dread,
And as at a holy shrine
Knelt before the form divine.

All had passed—the pride, the power,
Of the soul's creative hour—
Exaltation's soaring flight
To the spirit's loftiest height.

Had he dared to paint the Lord ?
Dared to paint the Christ, the Word ?
Ah, the folly ! Ah, the sin !
Ah, the shame his soul within !
Saints might turn on him their eyes
From the hills of Paradise,
But the painter could not brook
On that pictured face to look.

Yet the form was grand and fair,
Fit to move a world to prayer ;
God-like in its strength and stress,
Human in its tenderness.
From it streamed the Light divine,
O'er it drooped the heavenly vine,
And beneath the bending spray
Stood the Life, the Truth, the Way !

Suddenly with eager hold,
Back he swept the curtain's fold,
Letting all the sunset glow
O'er the living canvas flow.
Surely then the wondrous eyes
Met his own in tenderest wise,
And the Lord Christ, half revealed,
Smiled upon him as he kneeled !

Trembling, throbbing, quick as thought,
Up he brush and palette caught,
And where deepest shade was thrown

Set one sign for God alone !
Years have passed—but, even yet,
Where the massive frame is set
You may find these words : “ *Nec me
Prætermittas, Domine !* ”

“ Neither pass me by, O Lord ! ”
Christ, the Life, the Light, the Word,
Low we bow before thy feet,
Thy remembrance to entreat !
In our soul's most secret place,
For no eye but thine to trace,
Lo ! this prayer we write : “ *Nec me
Prætermittas, Domine !* ”

FROM EXILE

PARIS, SEPTEMBER 3, 1879

(A Mother speaks)

AH, dear God, when will it be day ?
I cannot sleep, I cannot pray.
Tossing, I watch the silent stars
Mount up from the horizon bars :
Orion with his flaming sword,
Proud chieftain of the glorious horde ;
Auriga up the lofty arch
Pursuing still his stately march—
So patient and so calm are they.
Ah, dear God ! when will it be day ?

O Mary, Mother ! Hark ! I hear
A cock crow through the silence clear !
The dawn's faint crimson streaks the east,
And, afar off, I catch the least
Low murmur of the city's stir
As she shakes off the dreams of her !
List ! there's a sound of hurrying feet
Far down below me in the street.
Thank God ! the weary night is past,
The morning comes—'tis day at last.

Wake, Rosalie ! Awake ! arise !
The sun is up, it gilds the skies.
She does not stir. The young sleep sound

As dead men in their graves profound.
Ho, Rosalie ! At last ? Now haste !
To-day there is no time to waste.
Bring me fresh water. Braid my hair.
Hand me the glass. Once I was fair
As thou art. Now I look so old
It seems my death-knell should be tolled.

Ill ? No ! (I want no wine.) So pale ?
Like a white ghost, so wan and frail ?
Well, that's not strange. All night I lay
Waiting and watching for the day.
But—there ! I'll drink it ; it may make
My cheeks burn brighter for his sake
Who comes to-day. My boy ! my boy !
How can I bear the unwonted joy ?
I, who for eight long years have wept
While happier mothers smiling slept ;
While others decked their sons first-born
For dance, or fête, or bridal morn,
Or proudly smiled to see them stand
The stateliest pillars of the land !
For he, so gallant and so gay,
As young and debonair as they,
My beautiful, brave boy, my life,
Went down in the unequal strife !
The right or wrong ? Oh, what care I ?
The good God judgeth up on high.

And now He gives him back to me !
I tremble so—I scarce can see.
How full the streets are ! I will wait
His coming here beside this gate,
From which I watched him as he went,
Eight years ago, to banishment.

Let me sit down. Speak, Rosalie, when
You see a band of stalwart men,
With one fair boy among them—one
With bright hair shining in the sun,
Red, smiling lips, and eager eyes,
Blue as the blue of summer skies.
My boy! my boy!—Why come they not?
O Son of God! hast Thou forgot
Thy Mother's agony? Yet she,
Was she not stronger far than we,
We common mothers? Could she know
From her far heights such pain and woe?—
Run farther down the street, and see
If they're not coming, Rosalie!

Mother of Christ! how lag the hours!
What? just beyond the convent towers,
And coming straight this way? O heart,
Be still and strong, and bear thy part,
Thy new part, bravely. Hark! I hear
Above the city's hum the near
Slow tread of marching feet; I see—
Nay, I can *not* see, Rosalie;
Your eyes are younger. Is he there,
My Antoine, with his sunny hair?
It is like gold; it shines in the sun:
Surely you see it? What? Not one—
Not one bright head? All old, old men,
Gray-haired, gray-bearded, gaunt? Then—then
He has not come—he is ill, or dead!
O God, that I were in thy stead,
My son! my son! Who touches me?
Your pardon, sir. I am not she
For whom you look. Go farther on
Ere yet the daylight shall be gone.

‘Mother!’ Who calls me ‘Mother?’ *You?*
You are not he—my Antoine! You—
A bowed, gray-bearded man, while he
Was a mere boy who went from me,
Only a boy! I’m sorry, sir.
God bless you! Soon you will find her
For whom you seek. But I—ah, I—
Still must I call and none reply!
You—kiss me? Antoine? O my son!
Thou art mine own, my banished one!

A MOTHER-SONG

SLEEP, baby, sleep ! The Christmas stars are shining,
Clear and bright the Christmas stars climb up the vaulted
sky ;

Low hangs the pale moon, in the west declining :
Sleep, baby, sleep, the Christmas morn is nigh !

Hush, baby, hush ! For Earth her watch is keeping ;
Watches and waits she the angels' song to hear ;
Listening for the swift rush of their wings downsweeping,
Joy and Peace proclaiming through the midnight clear.

Dream, baby, dream ! The far-off chimes are ringing ;
Tenderly and solemnly the music soars and swells ;
With soft reverberation the happy bells are swinging,
While each to each responsive the same sweet story tells !

Hark, baby, hark ! Hear how the choral voices,
All jubilantly singing, take up the glad refrain,
"Unto you is born a Saviour," while heaven with earth
rejoices,
And all its lofty battlements re-echo with the strain !

Wake, baby, wake ! For, lo ! in floods of glory
The Christmas Day advances over the hills of morn !
Wake, baby, wake ! and smile to hear the story
How Christ, the Son of Mary, in Bethlehem was born !

EASTER MORNING

DAME MARGARET spake to Annie Blair,
To Annie Blair spake she,
As from beneath her wrinkled hand
She peered far out to sea.

“ Look forth, look forth, O Annie Blair,
For my old eyes are dim ;
See you a single boat afloat
Within the horizon’s rim ? ”

Sweet Annie looked to east, to west,
To north and south looked she :
There was no single boat afloat
Upon the angry sea.

The sky was dark, the winds were high,
The breakers lashed the shore,
And louder and still louder swelled
The tempest’s sullen roar.

“ Look forth again,” Dame Margaret cried ;
“ Doth any boat come in ? ”
And scarce she heard the answering word
Above the furious din.

“ Pray God no boat may put to sea
In such a gale ! ” she said ;
“ Pray God no soul may dare to-night
The rocks of Danger Head ! ”

“ This is Good Friday, Annie Blair,”
 Dame Margaret cried again,
“ When Mary’s Son, the Merciful,
 On Calvary was slain.

“ The earth did quake, the rocks were rent,
 The graves were opened wide,
And darkness like to this fell down
 When He—the Holy—died.

“ Give me your hand, O Annie Blair ;
 Your two knees fall upon ;
Christ send to you your lover back—
 To me, my only son ! ”

All night they watched, all night they prayed,
 All night they heard the roar
Of the fierce breakers dashing high
 Upon the lonely shore.

Oh, hark ! strange footsteps on the sand,
 A voice above the din :
“ Dame Margaret ! Dame Margaret !
 Is Annie Blair within ?

“ High on the rocks of Danger Head
 Her lover’s boat is cast,
All rudderless, all anchorless—
 Mere hull and splintered mast.”

Oh, hark ! slow footsteps on the sand,
 And women wailing sore :
“ Dame Margaret ! Dame Margaret !
 Your son you’ll see no more !

“ God pity you ! Christ comfort you ! ”
The weeping women cried ;
But “ May God pity Annie Blair ! ”
Dame Margaret replied.

“ For life is long and youth is strong,
And it must still bear on.
Leave us alone to make our moan—
My son ! alas, my son ! ”

The Easter morning, flushed with joy,
Saw all the winds at rest,
And far and near the blue sea smiled
With sunshine on its breast.

The neighbors came, the neighbors went ;
They sought the house of prayer ;
But on the rocks of Danger Head
The dame and Annie Blair,

With still, white faces, watched the deep
Without a tear or moan.
“ I cannot weep,” said Annie Blair—
“ My heart is turned to stone.”

Forth from the church the pastor came,
And up the rocks strode he,
Baring his thin white locks to meet
The salt breath of the sea.

“ The rocks shall rend, the earth shall quake,
The sea give up its dead,
For Christ our Lord is risen indeed—
'Tis Easter morn,” he said.

Oh, hark ! oh, hark ! A startled cry,
A rush of hurrying feet,
The swarming of a hundred men
Adown the village street.

“Now unto God and Christ the Lord
Be praise and thanks alway !
The sea hath given up its dead
This blessed Easter-day.”

SEALED ORDERS

“OH, whither bound, my captain?
The wind is blowing free,
And overhead the white sails spread
As we go out to sea.”

He looked to north, he looked to south,
Or ever a word he spake;
“With orders sealed my sails I set—
Due east my course I take.”

“But to what port?” “Nay, nay,” he cried,
“This only do I know,
That I must sail due eastward
Whatever wind may blow.”

For many a day we sailed east.
“O captain, tell me true,
When will our good ship come to port?”
“I cannot answer you!”

“Then, prithee, gallant captain,
Let us but drift awhile!
The current setteth southward
Past many a sunny isle,

“Where cocoas grow, and mangoes,
And groves of feathery palm,
And nightingales sing all night long
To roses breathing balm.”

“Nay, tempt me not,” he answered,
“This only do I know,
That I must sail due eastward
Whatever winds may blow!”

Then sailed we on, and sailed we east
Into the whirlwind’s track.
Wild was the tempest overhead,
The sea was strewn with wrack.

“Oh, turn thee, turn thee, captain,
Thou’rt rushing on to death!”
But back he answer shouted,
With unabated breath:

“Turn back who will, I turn not!
For this one thing I know,
That I must sail due eastward
However winds may blow!”

“Oh, art thou fool or madman?
Thy port is but a dream,
And never on the horizon’s rim
Will its fair turrets gleam.”

Then smiled the captain wisely,
And slowly answered he,
The while his keen glance widened
Over the lonely sea:

“I carry sealed orders.
This only thing I know,
That I must sail due eastward
Whatever winds may blow!”

AN ANNIVERSARY

*So long, so short,
So swift, so slow,
Are the years of man
As they come and go !*

O LOVE, it was so long ago !
So long, so long that we were young,
And in the cloisters of our hearts
Hope all her joy-bells rung !
So long, so long that since that hour
Fulf half a lifetime hath gone by—
How ran the days ere first we met,
Belovéd, thou and I ?

We had our dreams, no doubt. The dawn
Must still presage the rising sun,
And rose and crimson flush the east
Ere day is well begun.
We had our dreams—fair, shadowy wraiths
That fled when Day's full splendor kissed
Our souls' high places, and its winds
Swept the vales clear of mist !

*So long, so short,
So swift, so slow,
Are the years of man
As they come and go !*

O love, it was but yesterday !
Who said it was so long ago ?
How many times the rose hath bloomed,
Why should we care to know ?
For it was just as sweet last June,
As dewy fresh, as fair, as red,
As when our first glad Eden knew
The rare perfumes it shed !

O love, it was but yesterday !
If yesterday is far away,
As brightly on the hill-tops lies
The sunshine of to-day.
Sing thou, my soul ! O heart, be glad !
O circling years, fly swift or slow !
Your ripening harvests shall not fail,
Nor autumn's utmost glow.

MARTHA

YEA, Lord !—Yet some must serve.

Not all with tranquil heart,
Even at thy dear feet,
Wrapped in devotion sweet,
May sit apart !

Yea, Lord !—Yet some must bear

The burden of the day,
Its labor and its heat,
While others at thy feet
May muse and pray !

Yea, Lord !—Yet some must do

Life's daily task-work ; some
Who fain would sing, must toil
Amid earth's dust and moil,
While lips are dumb !

Yea, Lord !—Yet man must earn,

And woman bake the bread !
And some must watch and wake
Early, for others' sake,
Who pray instead !

Yea, Lord !—Yet even thou

Hast need of earthly care.
I bring the bread and wine
To thee, O Guest Divine !
Be this my prayer !

THE HOUR

WHAT is the hour of the day ?
O watchman, can you tell ?
Hark ! from the tower of Time
Strikes the alarum-bell !

The strokes I cannot count.
O watchman, can you see
On the misty dial-plate
What hours remain for me ?

I know the rosy dawn
Faded—how long ago !—
Lost in the radiant depths
Of morning's golden glow.

Then all the mountain tops
Stood breathless at high noon,
While earth for brief repose
Put off her sandal shoon.

Now faster fly the hours—
The afternoon is here ;
O watchman in the tower,
Tell me, is sunset near ?

Yet—why care I to know ?—
Beyond the sunset bars
Upon the dead day wait
The brightest of the stars !

THE CLOSED GATE

I WALKED along a narrow way ;
The sun was shining everywhere ;
The jocund earth was glad and gay,
With morning freshness in the air.

The grass was green beneath my feet ;
The skies were blue and soft o'erhead ;
The robin carolled clear and sweet,
And flowers their fragrance round me shed.

How shone the great hills far away ;
How clear they rose against the blue ;
How fair the tranquil meadows lay,
Where the bright river glances through !

But suddenly, as on I pressed,
Before me frowned a closed gate ;
Filled with dismay, and sore distressed,
I strove in vain to conquer fate !

Beyond, the hills for which I sighed—
Beyond, the valleys still and fair—
Beyond, the meadows stretching wide,
And all the shining fields of air !
.
.
.
.
.

What does it mean, O Father ! when
Thy children reach some closed gate,
Which, though they knock and knock again,
Will not its watch and ward abate ?

Still shall they batter at the walls ?
Or still, like children, cry and fret,
While the loud clamor of their calls
Swells high in turbulent regret ?

When thou hast barred the door, shall they
Challenge thy wisdom, God of love ?
Or humbly wait beside the way
Till thou the barrier shalt remove ?

Too oft we cannot hear thee speak,
So loud our voices and our prayers,
While to the patient and the meek
The gate thou openest unawares !

CONTENT

NOT asking how or why,
Before thy will,
O Father, let my heart
Lie hushed and still !

Why should I seek to know ?
Thou art all-wise ;
If thou dost bid me go,
Let that suffice.

If thou dost bid me stay,
Make me content
In narrow bounds to dwell
Till life be spent.

If thou dost seal the lips
That fain would speak,
Let me be still till thou
The seal shalt break.

If thou dost make pale Pain
Thy minister,
Then let my patient heart
Clasp hands with her.

Or, if thou sendest Joy
To walk with me,

My Father, let her lead
Me nearer thee !

Teach me that Joy and Pain
Alike are thine ;
Teach me my life to leave
In hands divine !

MY WONDERLAND

THEY tell me you have been in Wonderland.
Why, so have I! No boat's keel touched the strand,
No white sails flew, no swiftly gliding car
Bore me to mystic realms, unknown and far.

And yet I, too, with these same questioning eyes,
Have seen its mountains and beheld its skies ;
I, too, have been in Wonderland, and know
How through its secret vales the weird winds blow.

One morn, in Wonderland—one chill spring morn—
I saw a princess sleeping, pale and lorn,
Cold as a corse ; when, lo ! from out the south
A young knight rode, and kissed her sad, sweet mouth.

She smiled, she woke ! Then rang from far and near
Her minstrels' voices, jubilant and clear ;
While in a trice, with eager, noiseless feet,
All the young maiden grasses, fair and fleet,

Ran over hill and dale, to bring to her
Green robes with wild flowers 'broidered. All astir
Were the gay, courtier butterflies ; the trees
Flung forth their fluttering banners to the breeze ;

The soft airs fanned her ; and, in russet dressed,
Her happy servitors around her pressed,
Bearing strange sweets, and curious flagons filled
With life's new wine, that all her pulses thrilled.

In this same Wonderland, one sweet spring day,
In a gray casket, deftly hidden away,
I found two pearls ; but as I looked they grew
To living jewels, that took wing and flew. -

And once a creeping worm, within my sight
Wove its own shroud and coffin, sealed and white ;
Then, bursting from its cerements, soared in air,
A radiant vision, most supremely fair.

Out of the darksome mould, before my eyes
I saw a shaft of emerald arise,
Bearing a silver chalice veined with gold,
And set with gems of splendors manifold.

Once in a vast, pale, hollow pearl I stood,
When o'er the vaulted dome there swept a flood
Of lurid waves, and a dark funeral pyre
Took to its heart a globe of crimson fire.

The pageant faded. Lo ! the pearl became
A liquid sapphire, touched with rosy flame ;
And as I gazed, a silver crescent hung
In violet depths, a thousand stars among.

I saw a woman, marvellously fair,
Flushed with warm life, and buoyant as the air ;
Next morn she was a statue, breathless, cold,
A marble goddess of transcendent mould.

I saw a folded bud, in one short hour,
Open its sweet, warm heart and be a flower.
O Wonderland ! thou art so near, so far ;
Near as this rose, remote as yonder star !

THE GUEST

O THOU Guest so long delayed,
Surely, when the house was made,
In its chambers wide and free,
There was set a place for thee.
Surely, in some room was spread
For thy sake a snowy bed,
Decked with linen white and fine,
Meet, O Guest, for use of thine.

Yet thou hast not kept the tryst.
Other guests our lips have kissed :
Other guests have tarried long,
Wooed by sunshine and by song ;
For the year was bright with May,
All the birds kept holiday,
All the skies were clear and blue,
When this house of ours was new.

Youth came in with us to dwell,
Crowned with rose and asphodel,
Lingered long, and even yet
Cannot quite his haunts forget.
Love hath sat beside our board,
Brought us treasures from his hoard,
Brimmed our cups with fragrant wine,
Vintage of the hills divine.

Down our garden path has strayed
Young Romance, in light arrayed ;
Joy hath flung her garlands wide ;
Faith sung low at eventide ;
Care hath flitted in and out ;
Sorrow strewn her weeds about ;
Hope held up her torch on high
When clouds darkened all the sky.

Pain, with pallid lips and thin,
Oft hath slept our house within ;
Life hath called us, loud and long,
With a voice as trumpet strong.
Sometimes we have thought, O Guest,
Thou wert coming with the rest,
Watched to see thy shadow fall
On the inner chamber wall.

For we know that, soon or late,
Thou wilt enter at the gate,
Cross the threshold, pass the door,
Glide at will from floor to floor.
When thou comest, by this sign
We shall know thee, Guest divine :
Though alone thy coming be,
Someone must go forth with thee !

AN OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN

AN old-fashioned garden ? Yes, my dear,
No doubt it is. I was thinking here
Only to-day, as I sat in the sun,
How fair was the scene I looked upon ;
Yet wondered still, with a vague surprise,
How it might look to other eyes.

'Tis a wide old garden. Not a bed
Cut here and there in the turf ; instead,
The broad straight paths run east and west,
Down which two horsemen could ride abreast,
And north and south with an equal state,
From the gray stone wall to the low white gate.

And, where they cross on the middle line,
Virgin's-bower and wild woodbine
Clamber and climb at their own sweet will
Over the latticed arbor still ;
Though since they were planted years have flown,
And many a time have the roses blown.

To the right the hill runs down to the river,
Where the willows droop and the aspens shiver,
And under the shade of the hemlock-trees
The low ferns nod to the passing breeze ;
There wild flowers blossom, and mosses creep
With a tangle of vines o'er the wooded steep.

So quiet it is, so cool and still,
In the green retreat of the shady hill !
And you scarce can tell, as you look within,
Where the garden ends and the woods begin.
But here, where we stand, what a blaze of light,
What a wealth of color, makes glad the sight !

Red roses burn in the morning glow ;
White roses proffer their cups of snow ;
In scarlet and crimson and cloth-of-gold
The zinnias flaunt, and the marigold ;
And stately and tall the lilies stand,
Like vestal virgins, on either hand.

Here gay sweet-peas, like butterflies,
Flutter and dance under summer skies ;
Blue violets here in the shade are set,
With a border of fragrant mignonette ;
And here are pansies and columbine,
And the burning stars of the cypress-vine.

Stately hollyhocks, row on row,
Golden sunflowers, all aglow,
Scarlet poppies, and larkspurs blue,
Asters of every shade and hue ;
And over the wall, like a trail of fire,
The red nasturtium climbs high and higher.

My lady's-slippers are fair to see,
And her pinks are as sweet as sweet can be,
With gilly-flowers and mourning-brides,
And many another flower besides.
Do you see that rose without a thorn ?
It was planted the year my Hal was born.

And he is a man now. Yes, my dear,
An old-fashioned garden ! But, sitting here,
I think how often lover and maid
Down these long flowery paths have strayed,
And how little feet have over them run
That will stir no more in shade or sun.

As one who reads from an open book,
On these fair luminous scrolls I look ;
And all the story of life is there—
Its loves and losses, hope and despair.
An old-fashioned garden—but to my eyes
Fair as the hills of Paradise.

DISCONTENT

I.

(The Brier Rose speaks.)

I CLING to the garden wall
Outside, where the grasses grow ;
Where the tall weeds flaunt in the sun,
And the yellow mulleins blow.
The dock and the thistle crowd
Close to my shrinking feet,
And the gypsy yarrow shares
My cup and the food I eat.

The rude winds toss my hair,
The wild rains beat me down,
The wayside dust lies white
And thick on my leafy crown.
I cannot keep my robes
From wanton fingers free,
And the veriest beggar dares
To stop and gaze at me.

Sometimes I climb and climb
To the top of the garden wall,
And I see her where she stands,
Stately and fair and tall—

My sister, the red, red Rose,
My sister, the royal one,
The fairest flower that blows
Under the summer sun !

What wonder that she is fair ?
What wonder that she is sweet ?
The treasures of earth and air
Lie at her dainty feet ;
The choicest fare is hers,
Her cup is brimmed with wine ;
Rich are her emerald robes,
And her bed is soft and fine.

She need not lift her head
Even to sip the dew ;
No rude touch makes her shrink
The whole long summer through.
Her servants do her will ;
They come at her beck and call.
Oh, rare is life in my lady's bowers
Inside of the garden wall !

II.

(The Garden Rose speaks.)

The garden path runs east,
And the garden path runs west ;
There's a tree by the garden gate,
And a little bird in a nest.
It sings and sings and sings !
Does the bird, I wonder, know
How, over the garden wall,
The bright days come and go ?

The garden path runs north,
And the garden path runs south ;
The brown bee hums in the sun,
And kisses the lily's mouth ;
But it flies away, away,
To the birch-tree, dark and tall.
What do you find, O brown bee,
Over the garden wall ?

With ruff and farthingale,
Under the gardener's eye,
In trimmest guise I stand—
Oh, who so fine as I ?
But even the light wind knows
That it may not play with me,
Nor touch my beautiful lips
With a wild caress and free.

Oh, straight is the garden path,
And smooth is the garden bed,
Where never an idle weed
Dares lift its careless head.
But I know outside the wall
They gather, a merry throng ;
They dance and flutter and sing,
And I listen all day long.

The Brier Rose swings outside ;
Sometimes she climbs so high
I can see her sweet pink face
Against the blue of the sky.
What wonder that she is fair,
Whom no strait bonds enthrall ?
Oh, rare is life to the Brier Rose,
Outside of the garden wall !

THE DOVES AT MENDON

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

Under the vine-clad porch she stands,
A gentle maiden with willing hands,
Dropping the grains of yellow corn.
Low and soft, like a mellow horn,
While the sunshine over her falls,
Over and over she calls and calls
“Coo ! coo ! coo !” to the doves—
The happy doves at Mendon.

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

Down they flutter with timid grace,
Lured by the voice and the tender face,
Till the evening air is all astir
With the happy strife and the eager whirl.
One by one, and two by two,
And then a rush through the ether blue ;
While Arné scatters the yellow corn
For the gentle doves at Mendon.

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

They hop on the porch where the baby sits,
They come and go as a shadow flits,
Now here, now there, while in and out
They crowd and jostle each other about ;
Till one, grown bolder than all the rest—
A snow-white dove with an arching breast—
Softly lights on her outstretched hand
Under the vines at Mendon.

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

With a rush and a whirl of shining wings,
They hear and obey—the dainty things !
Dun and purple and snowy white,
Clouded gray, like the soft twilight,
Straight as an arrow shot from a bow,
Wheeling and circling high and low,
Down they fly from the slanting roof
Of the old red barn at Mendon.

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

Baby Alice with wide blue eyes
Watches them ever with new surprise,
While she and Wag on the mat together
Joy in the soft midsummer weather.
Hither and thither she sees them fly,
Gray and white on the azure sky,
Light and shadow against the green
Of the maple grove at Mendon.

“Coo ! coo ! coo !” says Arné,
Calling the doves at Mendon !

A sound, a motion, a flash of wings—
They are gone—like a dream of heavenly things.
The doves have flown and the porch is still,
And the shadows gather on vale and hill.
Then sinks the sun, and the mountain breeze
Stirs in the tremulous maple-trees ;
While Love and Peace, as the night comes down,
Brood over quiet Mendon !

A LATE ROSE

I SENT a little maiden
To pluck for me a rose,
The sweetest and the fairest
That in the garden grows—
A blush-rose, proud and tender,
Upon its stem so slender,
Swaying in dreamy splendor
Where yellow sunshine glows.

Back came the little maiden
With drooping, downcast head,
And slow, reluctant footsteps,
And this to me she said :
“ I find no sweet blush-roses
In all the garden closes :
There are no summer roses ;
It must be they are dead ! ”

Then bent I to the maiden
And touched her shining hair—
Dear heart ! in all the garden
Was nothing half so fair !
“ Nay ! ” said I, “ let the roses
Die in the garden closes
Whenever fate disposes,
If I *this* rose may wear ! ”

PERIWINKLE

TINKLE, tinkle,
Periwinkle !
Soft and clear,
Far or near,

Still the mellow notes I hear !
Up and down the sunny hills,
Here you go, there you go,
Where the happy mountain rills
Tinkle soft, tinkle low ;
Where the willows, all a-quiver,
Dip their long wands in the river,
And the hemlock shadows fall
By the gray rocks, cool and tall—
In and out,
And round about,
Here you go,
There you go !

Tinkle, tinkle,
Periwinkle !
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Floats the music on the air !
Through the pastures wide and free,
Here you go, there you go,
Making friends with bird and bee,
Flying high, flying low ;

In and out, where lilies blowing
Nod above wild grasses growing,
Where the sweet-fern and the brake
All around rich odors make,
Where the mosses cling and creep
To the rocks, and up the steep—

In and out
You wind about,
Here and there,
Everywhere !

Tinkle, tinkle,
Periwinkle !

Day is done,
And the sun

Now its royal couch hath won !

Homeward through the winding lane,

Here you go, there you go,

While the bell in sweet refrain

Tinkles clear, tinkles low—

Tinkles softly through the gloaming,

“ Drop the bars—I’m tired of roaming

Here and there, everywhere

Through the pastures wide and fair.

Home is best,

Home and rest ! ”

Through the bars goes Periwinkle,

While the bell goes tinkle, tinkle,

Low and clear,

Saying, softly, “ Night is here ! ”

AFTERNOON

O PERFECT day,
I bid thee stay !
Too fast thy glad hours slip away ;
The morn, the noon,
Have fled too soon—
Delay, O golden afternoon !

O peerless Sun,
Thou radiant one
Whose dazzling course is half-way run,
Stay, stay thy flight
Down yon blue height,
Nor haste thee to the arms of night !

The west wind blows
O'er beds of rose,
But does not stir my deep repose.
In dreamful guise
I close mine eyes,
Borne on its wings to Paradise.

Beneath this tree
Half consciously
I share the life of all things free,
Hearing the beat
Of rhythmic feet,
As the grasses run my hand to meet.

The wild bee's hum,
The lone bird's drum,
O'er the wide pastures faintly come ;
And soft and clear
Falls on my ear
The cow-bell's tinkle, far and near !

Before my eyes
Three blue peaks rise,
Piercing the bright autumnal skies ;
Silent and grand,
On either hand,
Far mountain heights majestic stand.

By wreaths of mist
The vales are kissed—
Fair, floating clouds of amethyst,
That follow on,
Through shade and sun,
Where'er the river's course may run.

Here, looking down
On roof-trees brown,
I catch fair glimpses of the town.
There, far away,
The shadows play
On crags and boulders, huge and gray.

All whispering low,
The breezes go—
The wandering birds flit to and fro ;
Winged motes float by
Me as I lie,
And yellow leaves drop silently.

The morn, the noon,
Have fled too soon—
Delay, O golden afternoon,
While with rapt eyes
My spirit flies
From yon blue peaks to Paradise !

THE LADY OF THE PROW

BERMUDA, MAY, 1883

THE salt tides ebb, the salt tides flow,
From the near isles the soft airs blow ;
From leagues remote, with roar and din,
Over the reefs the waves rush in ;
The wild white breakers foam and fret,
Day follows day, stars rise and set ;
Yet, grandly poised, as calm and fair
As some proud spirit of the air,
Unmoved she lifts her radiant brow—
She, the White Lady of the Prow !

The winds blow east, the winds blow west,
From woodlands low to the eagle's nest ;
The winds blow north, the winds blow south.
To steal the sweets from the lily's mouth !
We come and go ; we spread our sails
Like sea-gulls to the favoring gales ;
Or, soft and slow, our oars we dip
Under the lee of the stranded ship.
Yet little reck she when or how,
The grand White Lady of the Prow.

We laugh, we love, we smile, we sigh,
But never she heeds as we glide by—
Never she cares for our idle ways
Nor turns from the brink of the world her gaze !

What does she see when her steadfast eyes
Peer into the sunset mysteries,
And all the secrets of time and space
Seem unfolded before her face ?
What does she hear when, pale and calm,
She lists for the great sea's evening psalm ?

Speak, Lady, speak ! Thy sealèd lip,
Thou fair white spirit of the ship,
Could tell such tales of high emprise,
Of valorous deeds and counsels wise !
What prince shall rouse thee from thy trance,
And meet thy first revealing glance,
Or what Pygmalion from her sleep
Bid Galatea wake and weep ?
The wave's wild passion stirs thee not—
Oh, is thy life's long love forgot ?

How canst thou bear this trancèd calm
By sunlit isles of bloom and balm—
Thou who hast sailed the utmost seas,
Empress alike of wave and breeze ;
Thou who hast swept from pole to pole,
Where the great surges swell and roll ;
Breasted the billows white with wrath,
Rode in the tempest's fiery path,
And proudly borne to waiting hands
The glorious spoil of farthest lands ?

How canst thou bear this silence, deep
And tranquil as an infant's sleep—
Thou who hast heard above thy head
The white sails sing with wings outspread ;
Thou whose strong soul has thrilled to feel
The swift rush of the ploughing keel,

The dash of waves, and the wild uproar
Of ocean lashed from shore to shore ?
How canst thou bear this changeless rest,
Thou who hast made the world thy quest ?

O Lady of the stranded ship,
Once more our lingering oars we dip
In the clear blue that round thee lies,
Fanned by the airs of Paradise !
Farewell ! farewell ! But oft when day
On our far hill-tops dies away,
And night's cool winds the pine-trees bow,
Our eyes will see thee, even as now,
Waiting—a spirit pale and calm—
To hear the great sea's evening psalm !

THOU AND I

APRIL days are over !
O my gay young lover,
Forth we fare together
In the soft May weather ;
Forth we wander, hand in hand,
Seeking an enchanted land
Underneath a smiling sky,
So blithely—thou and I !

Soft spring days are over !
O my ardent lover,
Many a hill together,
In the July weather,
Climb we when the days are long
And the summer heats are strong,
And the harvest wains go by,
So bravely—thou and I !

July days are over !
O my faithful lover,
Side by side together
In the August weather,
When the swift, wild storms befall us,
And the fiery darts appall us,
Wait we till the clouds sweep by,
And stars shine—thou and I !

Summer days are over !
O my one true lover,

Sit we now alone together
In the early autumn weather !
From our nest the birds have flown
To fair dreamlands of their own,
And we see the days go by,
In silence—thou and I !

Storm and stress are over !
O my friend and lover,
Closer now we lean together
In the Indian-summer weather ;
See the bright leaves falling, falling,
Hear the low winds calling, calling,
Glad to let the world go by
Unheeding—thou and I !

Winter days are over !
O my life-long lover,
Rest we now in peace together
Out of reach of changeful weather !
Not a sound can mar our sleeping—
Breath of laughter, or of weeping,
May not reach us where we lie
Uncaring—thou and I !

LATER POEMS

THE LEGEND OF THE BABOUSHKA

A CHRISTMAS BALLAD

“THERE'S a star in the East!” he cried,
Jasper, the gray, the wise,
To Melchior and to Balthazar
Up-gazing to the skies.

“Last night from my high tower
I watched it as it burned,
While all my trembling soul
In awe and wonder yearned.

“For I know the midnight heavens ;
I can call the stars by name—
Orion and royal Ashtaroth
And Cimah's misty flame.

“I know where Hesper glows,
And where, with fiery eye,
Proud Mars in burning splendor leads
The armies of the sky.

“But never have I seen
A star that shone like this—
The star so long foretold
By sage and seer it is !

“ When first I, sleepless, saw it
 Slow breaking through the dark—
Nay, hear me, Balthazar,
 And thou, O Melchior, hark!—

“ When first I saw the star
 It bore the form of a child,
It held in its hand a sceptre,
 Or the cross of the undefiled.

“ Lo ! somewhere on the earth
 It shines above His rest—
The Royal One, the Babe,
 On mortal mother’s breast.

“ Now haste we forth to find Him—
 To worship at His feet,
To Him of whom the prophets sang
 Bearing oblations meet ! ”

Then the Three Holy Kings
 Went forth in eager haste,
With servants and with camels,
 Toward the desert waste.

Ah ! knew they what they bore ?
 Gold for the earthly king—
Frankincense for the God—
 Myrrh for man’s suffering.

With breath of costly spices
And precious gums of Isis,
 The desert air was sweet,
As on they fared by day and night
 Judea’s King to greet.

The strange star went before them,
They followed where it led ;
“ ’Twill guide us to His presence,”
Jasper, the holy, said.

They crossed deep-flowing rivers,
They climbed the mountains high,
They slept in dreary places
Under the lonely sky.

One day, where stretched the desert
Before them far and wide,
They saw a smoke-wreath curling
A spreading palm beside ;

And from a lowly dwelling,
On household cares intent,
A woman gazed upon them,
In mute bewilderment.

“ O come with us ! ” cried Melchior,
And ardent Balthazar,
“ We go to find the Christ-child,
Led by yon blazing star !

“ Thou knowest how the prophets
His coming long foretold ;
We go to kneel before Him
With gifts of myrrh and gold.”

But she, delaying, answered,
“ My lords, your words are good,
And I your pious mission
Have gladly understood,

“ Yet I, ere I can join you,
Have many things to do :
I must set my house in order,
Must spin and bake and brew.

“ Go ye to find Messiah !
And when my work is done
I will your footsteps follow,
Mayhap ere set of sun.”

Across the shining desert
The slow train passed from sight ;
She set her house in order,
She bleached her linen white.

With busy hands she labored
Till all at last was done—
But thrice the moon had risen,
And thrice the lordly sun !

Then bound she on her sandals,
Her pilgrim staff she took ;
With bread of wheat and barley,
And water from the brook ;

And forth she went to find Him—
The babe Emmanuel,
Who should be born in Bethlehem
By David's sacred well.

All that long day she journeyed ;
She scanned the desert wide,
In all its lonely reaches
There was no soul beside—

No track to guide her onward,
No footprints in the sand,
Only the vast, still spaces
Wide-stretched on either hand !

Night came—but where the Wise Men
Had seen His burning star,
No glorious sign beheld she
Clear beaming from afar,

Though Orion and Arcturus
Shone bright above her head,
And up the heavenly arches
Proud Mars his legions led !

.

She did not find the Christ-child.
'Tis said she seeks Him still,
Over the wide earth roaming
With swift, remorseful will.

Her thin white locks the dew-fall
Of every clime has wet—
In palace and in hovel
She seeks Messiah yet !

In every child she fancies
The Hidden One may be,
On each bright head she gazes
The mystic crown to see.

She twines the Christmas garlands,
She lights the Christmas fires,
She leads the joyful carols
Of all the Christmas choirs ;

She feeds the poor and hungry,
And on her tender breast
She soothes all suffering children
To softest, sweetest rest.

Attend her, holy Angels !
Guard her, ye Cherubim !
For whatsoe'er she does for these
She does it as to Him !

DAYBREAK

AN EASTER POEM

MARY MAGDALENÈ,
At the break of day,
Wan with tears and watching,
Hasted on her way ;

Bearing costly spices,
Myrrh, and sweet perfume,
Through the shadowy garden
To the Master's tomb.

Slowly broke the gray dawn :
On her head the breeze
Shook a rain of dew-drops
From the cypress-trees.

Rose and lily parted
As to let her pass,
And the violets blessed her
From the tender grass.

Little heed she paid them ;
Christ, the Lord, was dead ;
All at last was over,
All at last was said.

What of hope remainèd ?
Black against the sky,
Calvary's awful crosses
Stretched their arms on high !

Mary Magdalenè
Made her bitter moan :
" From the sealèd sepulchre
Who shall roll the stone ? "

Swift she ran, her spirit
Filled with awe and fear ;
Wide the door stood open
As her feet drew near !

All the place was flooded
With a radiance bright ;
Forth into the darkness
Streamed a holy light.

Down she stooped, and peering
The dread tomb within,
Saw a great white angel
Where the Lord had been !

Sore she cried in anguish :
" Who hath him betrayed ?
They have taken away my Lord !
Where is he laid ? "

" Nay," the shining angel,
Calmly smiling, said—
" Why seek ye the living
Down among the dead ?

“ He is not here, but risen ! ”
All her soul stood still ;
Through her trembling pulses
Ran a conscious thrill.

“ Mary ! ” said a low voice ;
“ Rabboni ! ” answered she.
Then life was brought to light
And immortality !

Mary Magdalenè,
First of woman born
To see the clear light streaming
O'er the hills of morn ;

First to hail the Lord Christ,
Conqueror of Death,
First to bow before Him
With abated breath ;

First to hear the Master
Say—“ From Death's dark prison,
From its bonds and fetters,
Lo ! I have arisen !

“ Now to God, my Father—
Mine and yours—I go ;
And because I live
Ye shall live also ! ”

Didst thou grasp the meaning ?
Know that Death was dead ?
That the seed of woman
Had bruised the serpent's head ?

Didst thou know Messiah
The gates of hell had broken,
And life unto its captives
Once for all had spoken ?

O ! through all the ages,
Every son of man,
Be he slave or monarch,
Born to bliss or ban—

Lord, or prince, or peasant,
Jester, sage, or seer,
Wife, or child, or mother,
Priest, or worshipper—

Through the grave's lone portals
Soon or late had passed,
But no sign or token
Back to earth had cast !

In Ramah was a voice heard
Sounding through the years—
Rachel for her children
Pouring sighs and tears ;

Rizpah for her slain sons
Woful vigils keeping ;
David for young Absalom
In the chamber weeping !

All earth's myriad millions
To their dead had cried,
Empty arms outreaching
In the silence wide,

Yet from out the darkness
Came nor word, nor sound,
As the long ranks vanished
In the black profound—

Came no word till Mary
Heard the Angel say—
“Christ the Lord is risen ;
The Lord Christ lives to-day !”

From the empty sepulchre
Streamed the Light Divine ;
Grave where is thy victory ?
Where, O Death, is thine ?

Mary Magdalènè,
Hope is born again ;
Clear the Day-star rises
To the eyes of men.

Lo ! the mists are fleeing !
Shine, O Olivet,
For the crown of promise
On thy brow is set !

Lift your heads, ye mountains !
Clap your hands, ye hills !
Into rapturous singing
Break, ye murmuring rills !

Shout aloud, O forests !
Swell the song, O seas !
Wake, resistless ocean,
All your symphonies !

Wave your palms, O tropics !
Lonely isles, rejoice !
O ye silent deserts,
Find a choral voice !

Winds, on mighty trumpets,
Blow the strains abroad,
While each star in heaven
Hails its risen Lord !

“ Alleluia ! Alleluia ! ”—
How the voices ring !
Alleluia ! Alleluia ! ”
Earth and heaven sing !

Alleluia ! Christ is risen !
Chant his praise alway !
From the sealèd sepulchre
Christ is risen to-day !

THE APPLE-TREE

GRACEFUL and lithe and tall,
It stands by the garden wall,
In the flush of its pink-white bloom
Elate with its own perfume.
Tossing its young bright head

In the first glad joy of May,
While its singing leaves sing back
To the bird on the dancing spray.
“ I’m alive ! I’m abloom ! ” it cries
To the winds and the laughing skies.
Ho ! for the gay young apple-tree
That stands by the garden wall !

Sturdy and broad and tall,
Over the garden wall
It spreads its branches wide—
A bower on either side.
For the bending boughs hang low ;
And with shouts and gay turmoil
The children gather like bees
To garner the golden spoil ;
While the smiling mother sings,
“ Rejoice for the gift it brings !
Ho ! for the laden apple-tree
That stands by our garden wall ! ”

The strong swift years fly past,
Each swifter than the last ;

And the tree by the garden wall
Sees joy and grief befall.
Still from the spreading boughs
Some golden apples swing ;
But the children come no more
For the autumn harvesting.
The tangled grass lies deep
Where the long path used to creep ;
Yet ho ! for the brave old apple-tree
That leans o'er the crumbling wall !

Now generations pass,
Like shadows on the grass.
What is there that remains
For all their toil and pains ?
A little hollow place
Where once a hearthstone lay ;
An empty, silent space
Whence life hath gone away ;
Tall brambles where the lilacs grew,
Some fennel, and a clump of rue,
And this one gnarled old apple-tree
Where once was the garden wall !

THE COMFORTER

How dost thou come, O Comforter ?

 In heavenly glory dressed,
Down floating from the far-off skies,
 With lilies on thy breast ?
With silver lilies on thy breast,
 And in thy falling hair,
Bringing the bloom and balm of heaven
 To this dim, earthly air ?

How dost thou come, O Comforter ?

 With strange, unearthly light,
And mystic splendor aureoled,
 In trances of the night ?
In lone, mysterious silences,
 In visions rapt and high,
And holy dreams, like pathways set
 Betwixt the earth and sky ?

Not thus alone, O Comforter !

 Not thus, thou Guest Divine,
Whose presence turns our stones to bread,
 Our water into wine !
Not always thus—for thou dost stoop
 To our poor, common clay,
Too faint for saintly ecstasy,
 Too impotent to pray.

How does God send the Comforter ?

Ofttimes through byways dim ;
Not always by the beaten path
Of sacrament and hymn ;
Not always through the gates of prayer,
Or penitential psalm,
Or sacred rite, or holy day,
Or incense, breathing balm.

How does God send the Comforter ?

Perchance through faith intense ;
Perchance through humblest avenues
Of sight, or sound, or sense.
Haply in childhood's laughing voice
Shall breathe the voice divine,
And tender hands of earthly love
Pour for thee heavenly wine !

How will God send the Comforter ?

Thou knowest not, nor I !
His ways are countless as the stars
His hand hath hung on high.
His roses bring their fragrant balm,
His twilight hush its peace,
Morning its splendor, night its calm,
To give thy pain surcease !

SANTA CLAUS

A VOICE from out of the northern sky :

“ On the wings of the limitless winds I fly,
Swifter than thought over mountain and vale,
City and moorland, desert and dale !
From the north to the south, from the east to the west,
I hasten regardless of slumber or rest ;
Oh, nothing you dream of can fly as fast
As I on the wings of the wintry blast !

“ The wondering stars look out to see
Who he that flieth so fast may be,
And their bright eyes follow my earthward track
By the gleam of the jewels I bear in my pack.
For I have treasures for high and for low :
Rubies that burn like the sunset glow ;
Diamond rays for the crownèd queen ;
For the princess, pearls with their silver sheen.

“ I enter the castle with noiseless feet—
The air is silent and soft and sweet ;
And I lavish my beautiful tokens there—
Fairings to make the fair more fair !
I enter the cottage of want and woe—
The candle is out, and the fire burns low ;
But the sleepers smile in a happy dream
As I scatter my gifts by the moon's pale beam.

“ There’s never a home so low, no doubt,
But I in my flight can find it out ;
Nor a hut so hidden but I can see
The shadow cast by the lone roof-tree !
There’s never a home so proud and high
That I am constrained to pass it by,
Nor a heart so happy it may not be
Happier still when blessed by me !

“ What is my name ? Ah, who can tell,
Though in every land ’tis a magic spell !
Men call me that, and they call me this ;
Yet the different names are the same, I wis !
Gift-bearer to all the world am I,
Joy-giver, Light-bringer, where’er I fly ;
But the name I bear in the courts above,
My truest and holiest name, is—LOVE ! ”

THE ARMORER'S ERRAND

A BALLAD OF 1775

WHERE the far skies soared clear and bright
From mountain height to mountain height,
In the heart of a forest old and gray,
Castleton slept one Sabbath day—
Slept and dreamed, on the seventh of May,
Seventeen hundred and seventy-five.

But hark! a humming, like bees in a hive;
Hark to the shouts—"They come! they come!"
Hark to the sound of the fife and drum!
For up from the south two hundred men—
Two hundred and fifty—from mount and glen,
While the deep woods rang with their rallying cry
Of "Ticonderoga! Fort Ti! Fort Ti!"
Swept into the town with a martial tread,
Ethan Allen marching ahead!

Next day the village was all astir
With unwonted tumult and hurry. There were
Gatherings here and gatherings there,
A feverish heat in the very air,
The ominous sound of tramping feet,
And eager groups in the dusty street.
To Eben's forge strode Gershom Beach
(Idle it stood, and its master away);

Blacksmith and armorer stout was he,
First in the fight and first in the breach,
And first in work where a man should be.
“ I'll borrow your tools, my friend,” he said,
“ And temper these blades if I lose my head ! ”

So he wrought away till the sun went down,
And silence fell on the turbulent town ;
And the flame of the forge through the darkness glowed,
A square of light on the sandy road.
Then over the threshold a shadow fell,
And he heard a voice that he knew right well.
It was Ethan Allen's. He cried : “ I knew
Where the forge-fire blazed I must look for you !
But listen ! more arduous work than this,
Lying in wait for someone is ;
And tempering blades is only play
To the task I set for him this day—
Or this night, rather.” A grim smile played
O'er the armorer's face as his hand he stayed.
“ Say on. I never have shirked,” said he ;
“ What may this wonderful task-work be ? ”

“ To go by the light of the evening star
On an urgent errand, swift and far—
From town to town and from farm to farm
To carry the warning and sound the alarm !
Wake Rutland and Pittsford ! Rouse Neshobè, too,
And all the fair valley the Otter runs through—
For we need more men ! Make no delay,
But hasten, hasten, upon your way ! ”
He doffed his apron, he tightened his belt,
To fasten the straps of his leggings he knelt.
“ Ere the clock strikes nine,” said Gershom Beach,
“ Friend Allen, I will be out of reach ;

And I pledge you my word, ere dawn of day
Guns and men shall be under way.
But where shall I send these minute-men ? ”
“ Do you know Hand's Cove ? ” said Allen then,
“ On the shore of Champlain ? Let them meet me there
By to-morrow night, be it foul or fair ! ”

“ Good-by, I'm off ! ” Then down the road
As if on seven-league boots he strode,
While Allen watched from the forge's door
Till the stalwart form he could see no more.
Into the woods passed Gershom Beach ;
By nine of the clock he was out of reach.
But still, as his will his steps outran,
He said to himself, with a laugh, “ Old man,
Never a minute have you to lose,
Never a minute to pick or choose ;
For sixty miles in twenty-four hours
Is surely enough to try your powers.
So square your shoulders and speed away
With never a halt by night or day.”

'Twas a moonless night ; but over his head
The stars a tremulous lustre shed,
And the breath of the woods grew strangely sweet,
As he crushed the wild ferns under his feet,
And trampled the shy arbutus blooms,
With their hoarded wealth of rare perfumes.
He sniffed as he went. “ It seems to me
There are May-flowers here, but I cannot see.
I've read of the ‘ hush of the silent night ’ ;
Now hark ! there's a wolf on yonder height ;
There's a snarling catamount prowling round ;
Every inch of the ‘ silence ’ is full of sound ;
The night-birds cry ; the whip-poor-wills

Call to each other from all the hills ;
A scream comes down from the eagle's nest ;
The bark of a fox from the cliff's tall crest ;
The owls hoot ; and the very trees
Have something to say to every breeze ! ”

The paths were few and the ways were rude
In the depths of that virgin solitude.
The Indian's trail and the hunter's tracks,
The trees scarred deep by the settler's axe,
Or a cow-path leading to the creek,—
These were the signs he had to seek ;
Save where, it may be, he chanced to hit
The Crown Point road and could follow it—
The road by the British troops hewn out
Under General Amherst in fifty-nine,
When he drove the French from the old redoubt,
Nor waited to give the countersign !

The streams were many and swift and clear ;
But there was no bridge, or far or near.
It was midnight when he paused to hear
At Rutland, the roar of the waterfall,
And found a canoe by the river's edge,
In a tangled thicket of reeds and sedge.
With a shout and a cheer, on the rushing tide
He launched it and flew to the other side ;
Then giving his message, on he sped,
By the light of the pale stars overhead,
Past the log church below Pine Hill,
And the graveyard opposite. All was still,
And the one lone sleeper lying there
Stirred not either for cry or prayer.

Only pausing to give the alarm
At rude log cabin and lonely farm.

From hamlet to hamlet he hurries along,
Borne on by a purpose deep and strong.
Look ! there's a deer in the forest glade,
Stealing along like a silent shade !
Hark to the loon that cries and moans
With a living grief in its human tones !
At Pittsford the light begins to grow
In the wakening east ; and drifting slow,
From valley and river and wildwood, rise,
Like the smoke of a morning sacrifice,
Clouds of translucent, silver mist,
Flushing to rose and amethyst ;
While thrush and robin and bluebird sing
Till the woods with jubilant music ring !

It was day at last ! He looked around,
With a firmer tread on the springing ground ;
“ Now the men will be all a-field,” said he,
“ And that will save many a step for me.
Each man will be ready to go ; but still,
I must confess, if I'd had my will,
I'd have waited till after planting-time,
For now the season is in its prime.
The young green leaves of the oak-tree here
Are just the size of a squirrel's ear ;
And I've known no rule, since I was born,
Safer than that for planting corn ! ”

He threaded the valleys, he climbed the hills,
He forded the rivers, he leaped the rills,
While still to his call, like minute-men
Booted and spurred, from mount and glen,
The settlers rallied. But on he went
Like an arrow shot from a bow, unspent,
Down the long vale of the Otter to where

The might of the waterfall thundered in air ;
Then across to the lake, six leagues and more,
Where Hand's Cove lay in the bending shore.
The goal was reached. He dropped to the ground
In a deep ravine, without word or sound ;
And Sleep, the restorer, bade him rest
Like a weary child, on the earth's brown breast.

At midnight he woke with a quick heart-beat,
And sprang with a will to his throbbing feet ;—
For armed men swarmed in the dim ravine,
And Ethan Allen, as proud of mien
As a king on his throne, smiled down on him,
While he stretched and straightened each stiffened limb.
“Nay, nay,” said the Colonel, “take your rest,
As a knight who has done his chief's behest !”

“Not yet !” cried the armorer. “Where's my gun ?
A knight fights on till the field is won !”
And into Fort Ti, ere dawn of day,
He stormed with his comrades to share the fray !

FORESHADOWINGS

WIND of the winter night,
Under the starry skies
Somewhere my lady bright,
Slumbering lies.
Wrapped in calm maiden dreams,
Where the pale moonlight streams,
Softly she sleeps.

I do not know her face,
Pure as the lonely star
That in yon darkling space
Shineth afar ;
Never with soft command
Touched I her willing hand,
Kissed I her lips.

I have not heard her voice,
I do not know her name ;
Yet doth my heart rejoice,
Owning her claim ;
Yet am I true to her ;
All that is due to her
Sacred I keep.

Never a thought of me
Troubles her soft repose ;
Courant of mine may be
Lily nor rose.

They may not bear to her
This heart's fond prayer to her,
Yet—she is mine.

Wind of the winter night,
Over the fields of snow,
Over the hill so white,
Tenderly blow !
Somewhere red roses bloom ;
Into her warm, hushed room,
Bear thou their breath.

Whisper—Nay, nay, thou sprite,
Breathe thou no tender word ;
Wind of the winter night,
Die thou unheard.
True love shall yet prevail,
Telling its own sweet tale :
Till then I wait.

WON

BIRD, by her garden gate
Singing thy happy song,
Round thee the listening leaves
Joyously throng.
Tell them that yesternight
Under the stars so bright,
I wooed and won her !

Red rose, rejoice with me !
Swing all thy censers low,
Bid each fair bud of thine
Hasten to blow.
Lift every glowing cup
Brimming with sweetness up,
For—I have won her !

Wind, bear the tidings far,
Far over hill and dale ;
Let every breeze that blows
Swell the glad tale.
River, go tell the sea,
Boundless and glad and free,
That I have won her !

Stars, ye who saw the blush
Steal o'er her lovely face,
When first her tender lips

Granted me grace,
Who can with her compare,
Queen of the maidens rare?
Yet—I have won her!

Sun, up yon azure height
Treading thy lofty way,
Ruler of sea and land,
King of the Day—
Where'er thy banners fly,
Who is so blest as I?
I—who have won her!

Oh, heart and soul of mine,
Make ye the temple clean,
Make all the cloisters pure
Seen and unseen!
Bring fragrant balm and myrrh,
Make the shrine meet for her,
Now ye have won her!

BAPTISM OF FIRE

HAPPY birds caroling love-songs, winds in the tree-tops at
play,
Earth, like an Eden, rejoicing in the beautiful gladness of
May !

Over the mountains a splendor of crimson and amethyst
swept :
Gray mists stole up from the valley, the dense shadows after
them crept.

Down the green aisles of the orchard, pink-white with the
promise of bloom,
Stood the apple-trees, wooing already the brown bees with
wealth of perfume.

Then sounded the blast of a trumpet, like the cry of a soul
in pain,
Crashing of thunder-bolts warring with the hosts of the
scourging rain.

Till when the raging battalions swept on with resistless
sway,
Prone in the path of the tempest the pride of the orchard
lay !

"O beautiful buds close folded, that never will bloom !" I
cried,
"Alas for the unfulfilment, alas for the bliss denied !"

But filling my arms with the branches, I carried them in,
where the fire
Blazed on the glowing hearth-stone like a sacrificial pyre.

And into the flames I tossed them, when before my startled
eyes,
As in a miraculous vision, shone a marvel, a surprise.

In the heart of the fiery splendor the pale buds, one by one,
Opened to heat of the burning as to kiss of the summer
sun!

AT THE FEAST

“And the Lord of the Castle is Time.”

WHEN the hour has come and the servants wait
The tramp of steeds at the castle gate,
When the lamps aglow in the banquet-hall
Like a thousand stars burn over all,
When the board is spread and the feast is set,
And the dew on the roses lingers yet,
 Whom shall the Master summon
 To sit at his right hand ?

Let the music soar to the vaulted roof,
Let the flute-notes swell, alow, aloof,
While chief and retainer alike await
The Lord of the Castle who cometh late ;
The guests are bidden, the red wine flows,
But not the wisest among them knows
 Whom the Master shall summon
 To sit at his right hand !

For the Lord of the Castle, who cometh late,
When he comes, at length, in pomp and state,
And with glitter of mail, and clang of sword,
Strides to his place at the head of the board,
Oft-times reverses the order set,
Nor beckons to crown or coronet !
 Whom he will the Master summons
 To sit at his right hand !

OVER AND OVER

“ JUST the same thing over and over ! ”

But that is the way of the world, my dear ;
Over and over, over and over,
Old things repeated from year to year !

Hear what the sun saith : “ Patient still,
The vaulted heavens I climb and climb,
Over and over with tireless will,
Day after day till the end of time !

“ Never a pause and never a rest ;
Yet every morning the earth is new,
And ever the clouds in the golden west
Have a fresh glory shining through.”

Hear what the grass saith : “ Up the hills
And through the orchard I creep and creep,
Over the meadows, and where the rills
Laugh in the shadows cool and deep.

“ Every spring it is just the same !
And because it is, I am sure to see
The oriole's flash of vivid flame
In the pink-white bloom of the apple-tree.”

Hear what dear Love saith : “ Ah, I hear
The same old story over and over ;

Mother and maiden year by year
Whisper it still to child and lover !

“ But sweeter it grows from age to age,
The song begotten so long ago,
When first man came to his heritage,
And walked with God in the even-glow.”

A LISTENING BIRD

A LITTLE bird sat on an apple-tree,
And he was as hoarse as hoarse could be ;
He preened and he prinked, and he ruffled his throat,
But from it there floated no silvery note.
“ Not a song can I sing,” sighed he, sighed he—
“ Not a song can I sing,” sighed he.

In tremulous showers the apple-tree shed
Its pink and white blossoms on his head ;
The gay sun shone, and, like jubilant words,
He heard the gay song of a thousand birds.
“ All the others can sing,” he dolefully said—
“ All the others can sing,” he said.

So he sat and he drooped. But as far and wide
The music was borne on the air's warm tide,
A sudden thought came to the sad little bird,
And he lifted his head as within him it stirred.
“ If I cannot sing, I can listen,” he cried ;
“ Ho ! ho ! I can listen ! ” he cried.

THE FIRST FIRE

O VIRGIN hearth, as chaste and cold
As one who waits for burial mould,
Whom shall we summon here to keep
Watch while thou wakest from thy sleep ?

Not from the far sky spaces, blue
As those that Zeus and Hera knew,
May Hestia wing her airy flight,
Bringer of holy warmth and light.

Pan may not come. By stream and shore
Fair Naiads dry their locks no more ;
No Oread dwells in mount and glen ;
No Dryad flees from gods or men.

Yet still do forest voices clear
Greet him whose soul hath ears to hear ;
The murmur of the rustling pine
Is sweet as Hermes's harp divine.

The winds that rend the mighty oak
Clash loud as Ares's battle stroke ;
The maples toss each leafy crown
Though Dian's votive wreaths are brown.

Here, as to sacrificial pyre
Kindled with pure celestial fire,

Shall hemlock, pine, and maple bring
The deep wood's fragrant offering,

As incense to this household shrine.
O hearth, no richer spoil were thine
If all Dodona's oaks had shed
Their life-blood and for thee lay dead !

Thou waiting one, doth no strange thrill
Thy quickening veins with wonder fill ?
Have the far-seeing, prescient years
No presage for thy listening ears ?

Life hath its phases manifold,
Yet still the new repeats the old ;
There is no truer truth than this :
What was, is still the thing that is.

Therefore we know that thou wilt hear
Childhood's light laughter ringing clear ;
The flow of song, the breath of prayer,
Whisper of love, and sigh of care.

Thou wilt see youth go forth to gauge
His being's lofty heritage,
And manhood in the autumn eves
Come homeward laden with his sheaves.

O life and death, O joy and woe,
In mingling streams your tides shall flow,
While sun and storm alike fulfil
The mandates of the Eternal Will !

Now bring the torch and light the fire,
Let the swift flames leap high and higher,

Let the red radiance stream afar,
Dearer than glow of moon or star !

Burn, burn, O fire, burn still and clear,
And fill the house with warmth and cheer !
Soar, soar, O fire, so brave, so bright,
And souls shall soar to share thy flight !

MIDNIGHT CHIMES

Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!

Down yon lonely height
Hear the joyous summons pealing
Through the starry night.

Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!

Ring the Christmas bells;
From the church-tower on the hill
Clear the music swells.

Far and near the listening mountains
Bend to catch the strain,
Dome, and peak, and shadowy fastness
Join the glad refrain,—
Noel! Noel! All the pine-trees
Feel a subtile thrill,
And the hemlock groves, responsive,
Whisper and are still.

Noel! Noel! Through the valley
Where the river goes
In and out between the meadows,
Soft the music flows,
And the river, dumbly sleeping,
Feels its cold heart beat
Answering to the pulsing rhythm
Of the anthem sweet.

Noel! Noel! Hark! a rustling
On the frosty air,
Where the aspens, all a-quiver,
Bend their branches bare;
Airy birches, stately maples,
Black against the sky,
Wave their leafless boughs like banners
When a king goes by.

Noel! Noel! Sweet-breathed oxen,
In the farm-yard close,
Lift their horned heads to listen,
Startled from repose;
Then they sleep as slept the white flocks
On Judea's hills,
While again the olden glory
Earth with rapture fills.

Noel! Noel! Little children
In their soft nests smile,
Dreaming of fair choiring angels
Floating near the while;
Voiceless snow-birds, half awakened,
Stir their drowsy wings
With, mayhap, a vague, unconscious
Sense of heavenly things.

Noel! Noel! In the church-yard,
Where the low graves lie,
Light winds bear the strains melodious,
Soft as spirit's sigh;
Do ye hear it, O ye sleepers,
As it dies and swells?
Hear your ears the mystic music
Of earth's Christmas bells?

MY LADY SLEEP

IN cool gray cloisters walks my Lady Sleep,
Telling her smooth beads slowly, one by one ;
Along the wall the stealthy shadows creep ;
Night holds the world in thrall, and day is done.

Sometimes, while winds sigh soft above her head,
Down the long garden path my Lady strays,
And kneeling by the pansies' purple bed,
Counts the small faces in the moonlit haze.

Sometimes she lies upon the silver sands,
Following the sea-birds, as they wheel and dip ;
Or idly clasps, in still persistent hands,
The shining grains that through her fingers slip.

Or paces long, with flowing locks all wet,
Where the low thunder booms forevermore,
And the great waves no man hath numbered yet,
Roll, one by one, to break upon the shore.

Sometimes she counts the brightening twilight stars,
The daisies smiling in the meadow grass,
The slow kine trailing through the pasture bars,
The white sheep loitering in the mountain pass.

But evermore her hands are cool and calm—
Her quiet voice is ever hushed and low ;

And evermore her tranquil lips breathe balm,
And silent as a dream her garments flow.

She comes, she goes—whence, whither—who can tell?
Angels of God, do ye her secret keep?
Know ye the talisman, the sign, the spell,
The mystic password of my Lady Sleep?

THE KING'S TOUCH

- “ THE King's touch—there is magic in it !
When the early dawn in the east is red,
And I hear the song of the lark and linnet,
I will rise like a wraith from my sleepless bed.
- “ Then wrapped in a cloak of hodden gray
I will steal like a shadow over the hills,
And down where the pendulous willows sway,
And the rich, ripe grape its scent distils—
- “ Till I reach the edge of the forest wide ;
And there will I bide, where the still shades are,
Till the King and his huntsmen forth do ride,
And the sweet wild horn rings out afar.
- “ I will wait and listen until I see
The nodding plumes of the merry men
And the glancing pennants floating free,
A gleam of light in the lonely glen.
- “ Then low in the dust at his royal feet
I will kneel for the touch of his healing hand ;
Perchance he will give ere I entreat,
Before I cry he may understand !
- “ The King's proud Leech will be there I trow—
A wise old man with a reverent air—
And the laughing courtiers, row on row ;
Yet not unto them will I make my prayer.

" 'Tis the King, the King, who will know it all.

His eye will discover the wound concealed ;

He will bend to hear me before I call.

Whom the King touches shall be healed ! "

Was the maiden cured ? Ah, none can tell !

She was dust and ashes long ago,

With the proud young king and his leech as well,

And the smiling courtiers, row on row.

But whether the dawn in the east be red,

Or whether the stars bloom out afeld,

This truth remaineth, tho' myths lie dead :

" Whom the King touches shall be healed ! "

“BY DIVERS PATHS”

UNKNOWN to me thy name or state,
Save that a mantle saintly
Of rare and sweet unworldliness
Enfolded thee most quaintly.

We came and went by divers paths ;
We planned nor time, nor meeting ;
We spake not, save by nod, or smile,
Or glance of casual greeting.

Yet, led by some strange chance or fate
To-day by ruined altars,
Where, strained through clustering ivy leaves,
The pitying sunshine falters ;

To-morrow where your blue lakes shine,
And bloom your English daisies ;
Or on Helvellyn's lofty crest
The sunset splendor blazes ;

Or where deep organ-thunders roll
Through grand cathedral arches,
And stately Durham's triple towers
Look toward the Scottish marches ;

Thus, here and there, we met, nor knew
Each other's name nor mission,
The while a subtile kinship grew
To silent recognition.

At length where stretched a princely street
 In long, receding splendor,
 Down which the golden sunshine threw
 A radiance warm and tender ;

While far above us, frowning, hung
 A castle old and hoary,
 Stern on its battlemented heights
 Renowned in song and story ;

And near us, throned in marble state,
 O'er time and death victorious,
He sat, the magic of whose pen
 Made king and castle glorious—

There, face to face, once more we met,
 Like leaves in autumn weather,
 That blown afar by varying winds,
 Yet drift again together.

A look, a smile, and “ Is it thou ? ”
 A little low, sweet laughter,
 Just one close clasp of meeting hands,
 And then, a moment after,

Between us swept the surging crowd
 And we were borne asunder.
 O, friend unknown, in what far land
 Will we next meet, I wonder ?

THE BLIND BIRD'S NEST

“The nest of the blind bird is built by God.”—TURKISH PROVERB.

THOU who dost build the blind bird's nest,
Am I not blind ?
Each bird that flyeth east or west
The track can find.

Each bird that flies from north to south
Knows the far way ;
From mountain's crest to river's mouth
It does not stray.

Not one in all the lengthening land,
In all the sky,
Or by the ocean's silver strand,
Is blind as I !

And dost Thou build the blind bird's nest ?
Build Thou for me
Some shelter where my soul may rest
Secure in Thee.

Close clinging to the bending bough,
Bind it so fast
It shall not loose if high or low
Blows the loud blast.

If fierce storms break, and the wild rain
Comes pelting in,
Cover the shrinking nest, restrain
The furious din.

At sultry noontide, when the air
Trembles with heat,
Draw close the leafy covert where
Cool shadows meet.

And when night falleth, dark and chill,
Let one fair star,
Love's star all luminous and still,
Shine from afar.

Thou who dost build the blind bird's nest
Build Thou for me ;
So shall my being find its rest
Forevermore in Thee.

TWO PATHS

A PATH across a meadow fair and sweet,
Where clover-blooms the lithesome grasses greet,
A path worn smooth by his impetuous feet.

A straight, swift path—and at its end, a star
Gleaming behind the lilac's fragrant bar,
And her soft eyes, more luminous by far !

A path across the meadow fair and sweet,
Still sweet and fair where blooms and grasses meet—
A path worn smooth by his reluctant feet.

A long, straight path—and, at its end, a gate
Behind whose bars she doth in silence wait
To keep the tryst, if he comes soon or late !

ST. JOHN'S EVE

THE veil is thin between
The seen and the unseen—
Thinner to-night than the transparent air ;
All heaven and earth are still,
Save when from some far hill
Floateth the nightbird's unavailing prayer ;
Up from the mountain bars
Climb the slow, patient stars,
Only to faint in moonlight white and rare !

Ere earth had grown too wise
To commerce with the skies,
On this midsummer night the men of old
Believed the dead drew near,
Believed that they could hear
Voices long silent speaking from the mould,
Believed whoever slept
Unearthly vigil kept
Where his own death-knell should at last be tolled.

In solemn midnight marches
Beneath dark forest arches
They fancied that their hungry souls found God ;
His angels clad in light
Stole softly through the night,
Leaving no impress on the yielding sod,
And bore to mortal ears
Tidings from other spheres,
The undiscovered way no man hath trod.

Ah ! what if it were true ?
Then would I call ye who
Have one by one beyond my vision flown ;
I would set wide the door
Ye enter now no more
Crying, " Come in from out the void unknown !
Come as ye came of old
Laden with love untold "—
Hark ! was that nothing but the night wind's moan ?

A LITTLE SONG

LITTLE song I fain would sing,
 Why dost thou elude me so ?
Like a bird upon the wing,
 Sailing high, sailing low,
Yet forever out of reach,
 Thou dost vex me beyond measure,
Unallured by prayer or speech,
 Waiting thine own time and pleasure !

Well I know thee, tricky sprite—
 I could call thee by thy name ;
I have wooed thee day and night,
 Yet thou wilt not own my claim.
Hark ! thou'rt hovering even now
 In the soft still air above me—
Fantasy or dream art thou,
 That my heart's cry cannot move thee ?

Little song I never sang,
 Thou art sweeter than the strain
That through starry mazes rang,
 First-born child of joy and pain.
I shall sing thee not ; but surely
 From some all-compelling voice
Swelling high, serenely, purely,
 I shall hear thee and rejoice !

THE PRINCES' CHAMBER

I STOOD upon Tower Hill,
Bright were the skies and gay,
Yet a cloud and a sudden chill
Passed over the summer day—
A thrill, and a nameless dread,
As of one who waits alone
Where gather the silent dead
Under the charnel stone.

For before my shrinking eyes
They glided, one by one,
The great, the good, the wise,
Who here to death were done ;
Sinners and saints they came
With blood-stained garments on,
Reckless of praise or blame,
Or battles lost or won.

Then over the moat I passed
And paused at the Traitors' Gate ;
Did I hear a trumpet's blast,
Forerunner of deadly fate ?
Lo ! up the stairs from the river,
Where the sombre shadows crept,
With none to help or deliver,
Kings, queens, and princes swept !

O, some of those royal dames
Drooped, with dishevelled hair,
And mien of one who claims
Close kindred with despair !
And some were proud and cold,
With eyes that blazed like stars,
As under that archway old
They passed to their prison-bars.

To prison-bars or death !
Fair, hapless Anne Boleyn ;
That haughty maid, Elizabeth ;
Northumberland's pale queen ;
Margaret Plantagenet,
Her gray locks floating wild—
How the line lengthens yet,
Knight, prelate, statesman, child !

Fiercely the black portcullis
Frowned as I onward went ;
The Bloody Tower is this—
Strong tower of dread portent !
“ Show me the Princes' Chamber,”
To the Yeoman Guard I said ;
O, the stairs were steep to clamber,
And the rough vault dark o'erhead !

No sigh in the sunny room,
No moan from the groined roof,
No wail of expectant doom
Echoed alow, aloof !
But instead a mother sang
To a child upon her knee,
Whose peals of laughter rang
Like sweet bells mad with glee.

Sunshine for murky air,
Smiles for the sob of pain,
Joy for dark despair,
Hope where sweet hope was slain !
“ Art thou happy here,” I cried,
“ Where once was lonely woe,
And the royal children died,—
Murdered so long ago ? ”

She smiled. “ O, lady, yes !
Earth hath forgotten them ;
See how my roses press,
Blooming on each fair stem !
The princes, they sleep sound,
But love nor joy are dead ;
I fear no haunted ground,
I have my child,” she said.

WONDERLAND

WONDERLAND is here and there ;
Wonderland is everywhere ;
Fly not then to east or west
On some far, uncertain quest.

Seek not India nor Japan,
Nor the city Ispahan,
Where to-day the shadows brood
Over lonely Zendarood.

Somewhere smileth far Cathay
Through the long resplendent day ;
Somewhere, moored in purple seas,
Sleep the fair Hesperides.

Somewhere, in vague realms remote
Over which strange banners float,
Lies, all bathed in silver gleams,
The dear Wonderland of dreams.

Yet no need to sail in ships
Where the blue sea dips and dips,
Nor on wings of cloud to fly
Where the haunts of faery lie.

For by miracle of morn
Each successive day is born ;

And wherever shines the sun,
There enchanted rivers run !

Would you go to Wonderland ?
Lo ! it lieth close at hand ;
Wonderland is wheresoe'er
Eyes can see and ears can hear !

IN A GALLERY

(ANTWERP, 1891)

THE Virgin floating on the silver moon ;
Madonna Mary with her holy child ;
Pale Christs on shuddering crosses lifted high ;
Sweet angel faces, bending from the blue ;
Saints rapt from earth in ecstasy divine,
And martyrs all unmindful of their pain ;
Bold, mail-clad knights ; fair ladies whom they loved ;
Brown fisher-boys and maidens ; harvest-fields,
Where patient women toiled ; with here and there
The glint of summer skies and summer seas,
And the red glow of humble, household fires !

Breathless I stood and silent, even as one
Who, seeing all, sees nothing. Then a face
Down the long gallery drew me as a star ;
A winsome, beckoning face, with bearded lips
Just touched with dawning laughter, and clear eyes
That kept their own dear secret, smiling still
With a soft challenge. Dark robes lost in shade,
Laces at throat and wrist, an ancient chair,
And a long, slender hand whose fingers held
Loosely a parchment scroll—and that was all.
Yet from those high, imperial presences,
Those lofty ones uplifted from dear earth
With all its loves and longings, back I turned

Again and yet again, lured by the smile
That called me like a voice, "Come hither, friend!"

"Simon de Vos," thus saith the catalogue,
And "Painted by himself."

Three hundred years
Thou hast been dust and ashes. I who write
And they who read, we know another world
From that thine eyes looked out on. Wouldst thou smile,
Even as here thou smilest, if to-day
Thou wert still of us? O, thou joyous one,
Whose light, half-mocking laughter hath outlived
So much earth held more precious, let thy lips
Open and answer me! Whence was it born,
The radiance of thy tender, sparkling face?
What manner of man wert thou? For the books
Of the long generations do not tell!
Art thou a name, a smile, and nothing more?
What dreams and visions hadst thou? Other men
Would pose as heroes; would go grandly down
To coming ages in the martyr's *rôle*;
Or, if perchance they're poets, set their woe
To wailing music, that the world may count
Their heart-throbs in the chanting of a song.
Immortal thou, by virtue of one smile!

IN MARBLE PRAYER

(CANTERBURY, 1891)

So still, so still they lie
As centuries pass by,
Their pale hands folded in imploring prayer;
They never lift their eyes
In sudden, sweet surprise ;
The wandering winds stir not their heavy hair ;
Forth from their close-sealed lips
Nor moan, nor laughter, slips,
Nor lightest sigh to wake the entranced air !

Yet evermore they pray !
We creatures of a day
Live, love, and vanish from the gaze of men ;
Nations arise and fall ;
Oblivion's heavy pall
Hides kings and princes from all human ken,
While these in marble state,
From age to age await
The rolling thunder of the last amen !

Not in dim crypts alone,
Or aisles of fretted stone,
Where high cathedral altars gleam afar ;
And the red light streams down
On mitre and on crown,

Till each proud jewel blazes like a star ;
But where the tall grass waves
O'er long-forgotten graves,
Their silent worship no rude sounds can mar !

Dost Thou not hear and heed ?
O, in Earth's utmost need
Wilt Thou not hearken, Thou who didst create ?
Not for themselves they pray
Whose woes have passed for aye ;
For us, for us, before Thy throne they wait !
Thou Sovereign Lord of All,
On whom they mutely call,
Hear Thou and answer from thine high estate !

NOCTURNE

O BIRD beneath the midnight sky !
As on my lonely couch I lie,
I hear thee singing in the dark—
Why sing not I ?

No star-gleams meet thy wakeful eye ;
No fond mate answers to thy cry ;
No other voice, through all the dark,
Makes sweet reply.

Yet never skylark soaring high
Where sun-lit clouds rejoicing lie,
Sang as thou singest in the dark,
Not mute as I !

O lone, sweet spirit ! tell me why
So far thy ringing love-notes fly,
While other birds, hushed by the dark,
Are mute as I ?

No prophecy of morn is nigh ;
Yet as the sombre hours glide by,
Bravely thou singest in the dark—
Why sing not I ?

COME WHAT MAY

COME what may—
Though what remaineth I may not know,
Nor how many times the rose may blow
For my delight, or whether the years
Shall be set to the chime of falling tears,
Or go on their way rejoicing—
Yet, come what may,
I have had my day !

Come what may—
The lurid storm or the sunset peace,
The lingering pain or the swift release,
Lonely vigils and watchings long,
Passionate prayer or soaring song,
Or silence deep and golden—
Still, come what may,
I have had my day !

Come what may,
I have known the fiery heart of youth,
Its rapturous joy, its bitter ruth ;
I have felt the thrill of the eager doer,
The quick heart-throb of the swift pursuer,
The flush of glad possession—
And, come what may,
I have had my day !

Come what may,
I have learned that out of the night is born
The mystic flower of the early morn ;
I have learned that after the frost of pain
The lily of peace will bloom again,
And the rose of consolation.
Then, come what may,
I have had my day !

NUREMBERG

OVER the wide, tumultuous sea
In tranced hours I dream of thee,
Ancient city of song and myth,
Whose name is a name to conjure with,
And make the heart throb, Nuremberg !

I see thee fair in the white moonlight ;
The stars are asleep at noon of night,
Save one that between St. Lawrence' spires
Kindles aloft its silver fires—
A flaming cresset, Nuremberg !

Leaning over thy river's brim
Crowd the red roofs and oriels dim,
While under its bridges glide and gleam
The rippling waves of a silent stream,
Sparkling and darkling, Nuremberg !

Oh, the charm of each haunted street,
Ways where Beauty and Duty meet ;
Sculptured miracles soaring free
In temple and mart for all to see,
Wherever the light falls, Nuremberg !

Even thy beggars lift their eyes,
Finding ever some new surprise ;
Even thy children pause from play,
To hear what thy graven marbles say,
Thy myriad voices, Nuremberg !

Other cities for crown and king
Wide their glorious banners fling,
Lifting high on the azure field
Blazoned trophies of sword and shield,
That pierce the far skies, Nuremberg !

But thou, O city of old renown,
Thou dost painter and sculptor crown ;
Thou dost give to the poet bays,
Immortelles for the deathless lays
Chanted for thee, fair Nuremberg !

They are thy Lords of High Degree,
Marvels of art who wrought for thee,
Toiling on with tireless will
Till the wondrous hands in death were still.
Being dead, they yet speak, Nuremberg !

They were dust and ashes long ago ;
Over their graves the sweet winds blow ;
Yet they are alive whom men call dead—
This is thy spell, when all is said ;
This is thy glory, Nuremberg !

A MATER DOLOROSA

THEN down the street came Giacomo, flushed
With wine and laughter. I can see him now,
With Giulio, Florian, and young Angelo,
Arms interlaced, hands clasped, a roisterous crew
Of merry, harmless idlers. Ah, so long,
So long ago it was ! Yet I can see
Just how the campanile shone that night
Like molten silver, while its carven saints
Prayed in the moonlight. Then a shadow crept
Over the moon's face ; and it grew so dark
That the red star in Giacomo's cap
Paled and went out, and Giulio's shoulder-clasp
Lost all the lustre of its burnished gold,
And faded out of sight. Strange, how we lose
So much we would remember, and yet keep
Trifles like this until the day of doom !
They had swept past me where I stood in shade
When Giacomo turned. Just then the moon
Shone out again, illumining the place,
And he paused laughing, catching sight of me
There by the fountain.—Nay, sweet Signor, nay !
I was young then, and some said I was fair ;
But I loved not Giacomo, nor he me.—
Back he came crying, “ Little one, take heed !
Know you Fra Alessandro ? He would have
A model for his picture. Go you then
To-morrow to his studio and say

Giacomo sent you. At the convent there,
Near Santa Croce."

So I thither went

Early next morning, trembling as I stole
Into the master's presence. A grave man
Of most unworldly aspect, with bowed head
And pale chin resting on his long, thin hand,
He sat before an easel, lost in thought.
"Giacomo sent me," said I, creeping in,
And then stood breathless. Swift as light he turned,
But smiled not, spoke not, while his searching eye
For minutes that seemed hours scanned my face,
Reading it line by line. Signor, it seemed
As if the judgment-day had come, and God
Sat on the great white throne! At length he spoke,
Nodding as one content—"To-morrow morn
I pray thee come thou hither. Canst thou bring
A little child with thee—some fair, sweet child
Whose eyes are like the morning?"

Then I said,

Bethinking me of Beppo's little boy
Whose mother died last week—"Yes, I will come
Surely, my father, and will bring with me
The fairest child in Florence." "It is well,"
Softly he answered, and a sudden light
Made his pale face all glorious. At the door
I paused, and looking backward saw him bow
Before the easel as before a shrine.
I know not if he prayed, but never saint
Had aspect more divine.

Next day I went

With little Nello to the studio.
Impatiently the Frate greeted us,
Palette in hand. "So!—Thou art come at last?"
But as I drew the cap from Nello's head

And the moist tendrils of his golden hair
Fell softly on his forehead, he cried out :
“ The boy is like an angel ! And thy face,
Thy face, my daughter, I have seen in dreams,
But in dreams only. So, then, stand thou there,
And let the boy sit throned upon thine arm,
As thus, or thus.”

The child was half afraid ;
And round my neck he clasped his clinging arms,
Lifting his face to mine, a questioning face,
Filled with soft, startled wonder. While I held
Him close and soothed him, Alessandro cried,
“ O, hold him thus forever ! Do not stir !
I paint a virgin for an altar-piece.
And thou and this fair child——”

Even while he spoke
He turned back to the easel ; but I sprang
From the low pedestal, and, with the boy
Still in my arms, I fell down at his feet.
“ Not that, not that, my father ! ” swift I cried,
While my hot forehead touched his garment’s hem ;
“ Not that, for God’s sake ! Paint me otherwise.
Paint me as martyr, or as Magdalen,
As saint, or sibyl—whatsoe’er you will,
Only not that, not that ! ”

Smiling he stooped
And raised me from the ground, and took the child
In unaccustomed arms all tenderly,
Placing his brown beads in the dimpled hand.
“ But why ‘ not that,’ my daughter ? Nothing else
Ever paint I ! Not saint, nor Magdalen,
Only the Virgin and her Holy Child.”

Then suddenly I saw it all—the light
Dim in cathedral aisles, the kneeling crowds,
The swinging censers, candles burning clear,

With flash of jewels, splendor and perfume,
The high white altar, and above a face,
My face, pale shining through the scented gloom
Like a lone star ! Then in the hush a voice
Chanted " Hail, Mary "—and my heart stood still.
I who had been a sinner, could I dare
Thus to mock God and man ? Low at his feet
Again I fell, and there I told him all
As he had been my soul's confessor, poured
My very heart out. Signor, life is hard
And cruel to child-women, when the street
Is their sole nursing mother. I had had
No friend, no home, save when old Barbara
In some rare mood of pity let me creep
Under her wing for shelter. Then she died,
And even that poor semblance of a home
Was mine no longer. Yet, as the years went on,
Out of the dust and moil I grew as tall
And fair as lily in a garden plot,
Shut in by ivied cloisters—Let it pass !—
God knows how girls are tempted when false love
Comes with beguiling words and tender lips,
Promising all things, and their barren lives
Break into sudden bloom as when a bud
Unfolds its shining petals in the sun
And joys to be a rose !

No word he spake,
Fra Alessandro, sitting mute and pale.
But Nello, wondering at my sighs and tears,
Dropped the brown rosary and thrust his hands
Into the shining masses of my hair,
Pulling the bodkin out, and lifted up
My wet, wan face to kiss it. God is good ;
And even in that dark hour a thrill of joy
Ran through my soul as the pure lips met mine.

Still I knelt, waiting judgment, with the child
Clasped to my bosom, daring not to raise
My eyes to the face above me. Well I knew
It was the priest's face, not the painter's, now !
Was it his voice that through the silence stole,
" A little child shall lead them," murmuring low ?
Just for one instant on my head a hand
Fell as in benediction. Then he said
" Arise, my daughter, and come thou with me
Where bide the holy sisters of St. Clare,
Ruled by their abbess, saintliest of all
The saintly sisterhood. By work and prayer,
Fasting and penance, thou shalt purge thy soul
Of all iniquity, and make it clean."
Startled I answered him—" But who will care
For Nello then ? His mother died last week,
And Beppo's heart is buried in her grave—
He cares not for the child, nor gives him love."
But with a wide sweep of his beckoning arm
Down the long cloisters strode he, and across
The heated pavement of the market-place,
Nor looked to see if we were following him
Until he paused before the convent gate ;
Then rang the bell, and in the pause I heard
The sisters chanting, and grew faint with shame.
" Fear not, my child," Fra Alessandro said.
" Here comes Jacinta. Go you in with her,
And straightway tell the abbess all the tale
Told unto me this day. Farewell !" The gate
Swung to with iron clang, and Nello's arms
Half strangled me as round my neck he clung,
Awed by the holy stillness.

Since that hour
I with the humble sisters of St. Clare
Have given myself to deeds of mercy, works

Meet for repentance, ministering still
Unto all souls that suffer, even as now
I minister to you.

But what, you ask,
Of the boy Nello? Beppo died that year—
God rest his soul!—and the child 'bode with us.
But when the lad drew nigh to man's estate—
Too old for women's guidance—he was found
Oftener than elsewhere at the studio
Of old Fra Alessandro. He became
A painter, Signor, and men call him great.
I know not if he is—but you can see
His pictures yonder in San Spirito.

You've seen them? seen my face there? now you know
Whence comes the semblance that has puzzled you
Through all these weeks of languor?

It may be.

I am too old to care now, have outlived
Youth and its petty consciousness. My face
Is mine no longer. It is God's alone.
A Mater Dolorosa?—It is well!

AFTER LONG WAITING

AFTER long waiting when my soul puts off
This mortal vesture and is free to go
Through all God's universe in search of thee,
How shall it find thee, O, beloved and lost ?

Through the wide, shadowy spaces, through the deep
Profound abysses where the dim spheres roll ;
Through starry mazes and through violet seas,
And purple reaches stretched from world to world ;

Beyond the bounds of all it hath conceived,
Where knowledge falters and where reason fails,
And only faith's strong pinion dares to soar,
How shall it make its lonely way to thee ?

In that far realm what myriads abide !
When I have reached it, wilt thou find me, dear ?
One grain of sand beside the unresting sea—
One blade of grass where endless prairies roll !

I shall have changed, O love, I shall have changed !
The face you knew I shall no longer wear ;
For few or many though the years may be,
My youth fled with thee to the shore unknown.

I have grown older here, whilst thou beneath
The tree of life hast found thy youth again ;

I have grown faint, while strong, exultant, free,
Thy swift, glad feet scale the blue heights of God.

O friend and lover, go thou not too far !
Delay, delay, thine upward soaring flight,
Lest when I come, all tremulous with joy,
I fail to find thee on the heavenly hills !



and that the rock in my forced path here & there
but it is insignificant and the class are out.

For in the west the crescent moon hangs low,
And near at hand the long, long shadows war,
Darkness and silence gather round a lone.

Let the dark stream be near the mountains -
Oh, friends, dear friends, why does it seem
- come so late?

YC158501

M168144

953

D716

1897

